■ BUSINESS / B1
1st 7-month total of OFW remittances up 22% to $4.7B

■ SPORTS
La Salle Archers shoot down Ateneo Eagles anew

■ WORLD / A12
Bush presidency will be judged by 9/11, Katrina and Iraq war

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Jueteng's gone, says Hagedorn

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Sweet smell of success in South comes from durian

By Elinor V. Rivera

THE SMELL OF OVERripe durian is always sweet, even if it's the most notoriously pungent durian.

Ending Filipinos as the Philippines' first basket.

PAGES A2

Jobless rate fell to 7.7% in July, says NSO

"THE COUNTRY'S JOBLESS RATE FELL TO 7.7 percent in July from 8.5 percent in April. The National Statistics Office said the number of employed people rose by 2.7 percent, or 800,000, to 37.1 million over the past year from no. 30.5 percent of the labor force considered themselves underemployed. Of the 2.1 million people without jobs, 66.7 percent were male. Half of the jobless were aged between 15 and 24. AFP

THE GRAND acting for the ascent of leaders at the UN Security Council in New York City, part of the 60th anniversary celebrations of the UN. The three-day gathering, held under draconian security, brings together 170 leaders the likes of US President George Bush, his Russian and Chinese counterparts, Vladimir Putin and Hu Jintao, along with Prime Ministers Tony Blair of Britain, Dominique de Villepin of France, Junichiro Koizumi of Japan and Israel's Ariel Sharon.

4 pols got 'hot' e-mails

Erap received documents from FBI intel analyst

By Nelson D. Flores, Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio

AND THEN THERE WERE four. Former President Joseph Estrada, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Parañaque Rep. Eduardo Gonzalez have joined opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson in acknowledging that they had received e-mail from either former police Senior Supt. Michael Ray Aquino or Filipino-American Leandro Aragoncillo.

Aquino, a former aide of Lacson's, and Aragoncillo, an intelligence analyst at the federal Bureau of Investigation, were arrested Saturday in the United States by the FBI. (See complaint on Page A20.)

They were charged Monday with espionage in the US Federal Court of New Jersey.

The FBI said Aragoncillo had passed on classified information to Aquino who transmitted it to a "former national level public official," a "current high level public official" and a "second high level public official."

The three officials are yet to be indicted by

ARTICLE A12

HI THERE. Chatting like old friends, US President Bush and President Arroyo get up close before the president over the UN Security Council meeting, a historic first for a woman head of state.

GMA joins world leaders' appeal against terrorism

By GMC. Cabacungan Jr.

UNITED NATIONS—PRESIDENT MACAPAgal Arroyo joined world leaders on Wednesday in appealing for a halt on incitement to terrorism for the moment on the United Nations' 60th anniversary full show of unanimity for a fundamental values of the agency.

The US-member Security Council held a rare top-level summit to adopt a resolution on terrorism proposed by Britain following the July 7 London bombings.

"We have a solemn obligation to stop terrorism at its early stages," US President George W. Bush told the session. "We must do all we can to disrupt each stage of planning and support for terror as acts."

Bush also issued a more nuanced appeal, saying that war alone could not defeat terror, as if the world ignored "the hardship and oppression of others."

Ms Arroyo, who presided over the Security Council meeting, acknowledged Washington's role in the war against terror in the Philippines.

"It does terrorism the means to carry out their attacks, we have found it practical to recognize the leadership of the US," she said.

"We work closely on intelligence and security matters and in countering clandestine fund transfers through the Anti-Money Laundering

ONE A2/PAGE A6

Mike A misses Gloria most but not yet coming home

By Sil C. Cabacungan Jr.

NEW YORK CITY (VIA FLIT)—FIRST GEN. Gloria Arroyo will still have to read his battle in San Francisco's bay breeze a little longer even after President Macapagal Arroyo had declared that her worst political turmoil was over.

Arroyo said the UN Security Council meeting was the last time that he laid eyes on his wife since grudgingly going into voluntary exile to the United States two and a half months ago. He returned briefly to attend his half-sister's funeral.

PAGE A12

Why 'spy' on RP? It's normal, says US diplomat

By Philip Tubeza, Nikko Dizon and Luige del Puerto

INSTEAD OF CASTING DP ON THE opposition after the arrest of Michael Ray Aquino, administration officials should be more concerned about the extent of American intelligence gathering in the country, House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said yesterday.

Escudero pointed out that the US government was the source of whatever information the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) operative analyst Leandro Aragoncillo had leaked to Aquino.

"Why aren't they concerned that the US is gathering information about us without our knowledge?" Escudero said.

PAGE A12

He made 15 trips to RP in 5 years

ARAGONCILLO: Last born from June 13-17, '05

By Leila B. Salaverria

INTELLIGENCE ANALYST Leandro Aragoncillo of the federal Bureau of Investigation made 15 trips to the Philippines from 2000 to 2005, according to records of the Bureau of Immigration.

Aragoncillo, a graduate of the University of Illinois, has been charged with espionage by the United States government along with former police Senior Supt. Michael Ray

PAGE A12

REDISCOVERED (extreme left) a turquoise and diamonds or Loong, Rocio Maria, on her husband's birthday last Monday. Auction pieces (above) from the Imelda collection include diamond earrings, rows of diamonds and South Sea pearls, and a set of necklace, earrings and brooch valued at $1.4M (Extreme right) Without the bling, Ms Marcos appears to scoot on Thursday to stop the sale.

Imelda: These are all mine, stop auction

By Alcuin Papa

THE BOTS STUCK TO A Burmese ruby the size of a walnut stood out like a sore thumb from the glittering array of tiaras, diamonds and pearls that used to be Imelda Marcos'.

"Do you see how liberal this culture she saw this in New York but she wouldn't afford it," the once and, apparently to the last dictator

Continued Marcos

Belle is the birthstone of Imelda Marcos who was born in the

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

Second **FRONTPAGE**

Jueteng's gone, says Hagedorn

By Jerry E. Esplanada and Luige A. del Puerto

DID ANTI-JUETENG CZAR EDUARD HAGEDORN meet his self-imposed deadline of Sept. 15 for the "100-percent eradication" of the illegal numbers game?

It depends on whom you ask.

Hagedorn, also Pasay City police chief (CPO), said yesterday that "jueteng" operations had "completely ceased" in all the 39 provinces of Luzon, including Metro Manila, but "few spots" like Pampanga, Pangasinan, Batangas, Laguna, Quezon and Bicol.

"We should not rest on our laurels, however, knowing fully well that jueteng would stage a comeback as it had before," said Hagedorn in a confidential report to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

For his part, however, Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao would only say that the illegal numbers game had been "reduced to the lowest minimum since the last week of May."

He did not say it was completely gone.

"As of today, the campaign to eradicate jueteng continues to gain ground," the PNP chief said in a statement yesterday.

"The PNP Anti-Illegal Gambling Special Operations Task Force is continuously monitoring several areas where jueteng activities had been previously reported. We are confident we shall be able to sustain this campaign against illegal gambling with the cooperation of all sectors," he said.

Lomibao said that from January to July this year, the PNP confiscated some P6.83 million in bets and arrested 9,075 persons in nearly 18,000 police operations.

In his report to the President, Hagedorn stressed the need to replace his antijueteng task force's "friendly personnel" approach with what he called a "football policy" to ensure that jueteng did not return.

The policy calls for the "imposition of strict disciplinary action on local policemen and police personnel in areas where jueteng has resurfaced," he said.

"Even the so-called guerrilla operations should not be tolerated," Hagedorn said.

In his Sept. 15 report to the President, Hagedorn informed his purpose at to revive the Small Town Lottery, which he called the "best equivalent" for the illegal numbers game.

Launched in 1987 by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the STL, however, was reportedly used as a front by jueteng operators and corrupt government officials who continued to run and support the illegal game.

Hagedorn pointed out "with all the lessons learned during its previous run, there's a need to perfect the game this time."

Bishop rues loss of Pagcor funding for scholarships

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S DIocesan to stop accepting cash donations from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) has taken a toll on scholarship and feeding programs in the Archdiocese of Cebu.

"We're living in hardship," Cebu archbishop, Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, told reporters in an interview.

But Vidal, who is reported to have received substantial amounts in the past from the state-run gambling agency, did not elaborate on the number of students who lost their Church scholarships or how many had been affected by the stopping of the feeding program.

Vidal said that as far as he was concerned the issue of accepting donations from Pagcor was "closed."

"The CBCP [Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines] said no, so it's no," he said.

As far back as January 2004, the CBCP announced a statement that the Church had decided to stop accepting donations derived from gambling.

But the Church clarified that there may be other Church institutions that may have been receiving donations from Pagcor "for the sake of the poor."

The issue of the Church accepting gambling money was recently resurrected when the Inquirer reported in early September that Vidal, along with Archbishops Fernando Capalla and Ricardo Antonio, had received cash donations of between P500,000 and P4 million from Pagcor.

Quoting from a Pagcor memorandum from chair Efraim Genuino, the Inquirer reported that during Christmas 2003 alone, the agency had set aside as "cash gift" P500,000 for Vidal, Antonio and Retired Bishop Vicente Navarra. Capalla and Malolos Bishop Jose Oliveros was allocated P300,000 each during the same period.

Vidal, Capalla and Antonio all maintained that all the donations they got from Pagcor went straight to the poor.

The Inquirer has learned that the budget of at least one convent in Bulacan has suffered after the Church gave up the gambling money.

The convent used to receive some P15,000 from its bishop for operating expenses, such as for meals and salaries of employees. Christine S. Esguerra

Aussie mining firm wary of NGO protests

By Blanche S. Rivera

AUSTRALIA IS READY TO PUT IN BILLIONS of dollars in the Philippines' mining industry if the government would sustain the resurgence of mining despite persistent opposition from nongovernment organizations, an executive of an Australian mining firm with a multibillion contract here said.

Rob Thomson, chief operating officer of Climax Mining Ltd., said many international investors were concerned about the activities of anti-mining groups who were blocking mining projects, especially those operated by foreigners.

"Given a strong NGO activism against mining, we need a demonstration that it can work here," Thomson said in a recent interview.

Climax Mining Ltd., the parent company of Australasian Philippines Mining Inc. (APMI) which has a $3.17-million contract to mine gold and copper in Didipio Valley in Nueva Vizcaya, recently became the target of vociferous allegations by NGOs in the province.

Announcing groups including the Catholic diocese of Bayombong issued a joint statement denouncing the provincial council for "handing the call of money" and unanimously endorsing the Didipio mining project.

The council and APMI officers have denied any exchange of money for the approval of the 12-year project that targets the extraction of 13.6 million tons of gold and copper.

"The battle over mining in the Philippines is happening now the Didipio project, that's why the opponents of mining are fighting so hard to stop it," Thomson said.

Husband comes to aid of Pinay in Singapore slay

By Nikko Dizon

AGGRIEVED: Maria "Jean" Aguilar

THE HUSBAND OF GLORIA Aguilar, the Filipino domestic helper accused of the gruesome murder of another Filipina worker in Singapore, left for the city state early last night to be by his wife's side at her court appearance today.

Edwin Aguilar showed little emotion and gave short, noncommittal answers when he stopped at the Department of Foreign Affairs for a press briefing two hours before his 8 p.m. flight.

The 27-year-old father of two was to be accompanied in Singapore by Roque Serrano, the mayor of Tagudin, Ilocos Sur, and lawyer Sheryl Vitales of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"I'm just praying," he replied when asked how he was coping.

Gloria Aguilar, 39, is accused of killing her roommate, Jane Hernaiz La Pushka, 35, last Wednesday, chopping up her body and disposing of the parts in plastic bags. She was charged last Tuesday.

Aguilar's family said she was framed and appealed to Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday to save her from a possible death sentence.

The Philippine Embassy in Singapore has hired a Singaporean lawyer, Bhandar Krishna, to assist Aguilar. Mother said he would apply for access to his client today. He said he did not expect her to enter a plea.

Bibi spokesperson Gilberto Asuncion said the department sent consular Edwin Aguilar's trip.

Edwin said his wife last communicated with him by text last Friday, the day before she was arrested. He said the last message to know how the family was.

He said the DFA was still waiting for clearance from the Singaporean authorities for the release La Pushka's remains and transport them to the country.

The National Bureau of Investigation will be sending a police attaché to the Philippine Consulate in Singapore to observe the autopsy.

The NBI had also sent agents to Tagudin, Ilocos Sur to get statements from suspect Gloria Aguilar's family.

The Singapore government, reacting to the Aguilar family's claim that Gloria had been framed, said she has been treated fairly by Singapore's justice system.

"Gloria Lachpa Aguilar is treated no differently from any other suspect ... who has been charged with a similar offense," the home affairs ministry said Wednesday.

A Singaporean court has permitted police to hold Aguilar for a week without access to a lawyer or her family.

"Immediate access to legal counsel and her family members is presently not allowed so as not to compromise the ongoing investigations," the ministry said.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has moved to assist the families of both the victim and the accused.

The CBCP has formed a "crisis intervention team" to the victim's hometown in Nueva Vizcaya through its Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerant Workers.

The team will primarily assist the La Pushkas in "psycho-emotional therapy and family counseling which are needed by this family at present," the commission said in a statement.

A similar support group was formed by the CBCP to assist Aguilar's family in Ilocos Sur. With reports from Margaux Salcedo, Christine V. Espinosa and AP

Palace disowns bid to defer VAT

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG SAID SETTING TO GO WITH the bid by an ally in Congress to defer the imposition of the expanded value-added tax (VAT) on petroleum products and electricity, constitutional political adviser Gabriel Claudio said yesterday.

Claudio said Albay Rep. Joey Salceda's filing of a resolution in the House of Representatives to defer imposition of the VAT on these products had "no imprimatur or blessing from Malacañang."

"Definitely never informed or consulted us [about his plan]," Claudio said in a phone interview.

Salceda the other day told House officials some 147 congressmen had signified their intention to co-author House Joint Resolution No. 12 that he filed seeking to defer implementation of the 12-percent VAT on oil and electric power.

Salceda said he believed it impractical to raise the taxes on these products, which had risen 60 percent since the start of the year.

He said the business that a similar resolution could be filed in the Senate by Sen. Manuel Roxas III.

The new VAT law was to be implemented on July but the Supreme Court blocked it after the political opposition questioned some provisions of the tax measure before the tribunal.

The high court only recently ruled on the constitutionality of the VAT law and is set to lift its restraining order on its implementation before October.

Claudio said some lawmakers had questioned whether a joint resolution could defer implementation of a law.

He said the lawmakers he talked to had told him postponing implementation of the VAT law through a resolution was "[neither an amendment to the law."

Some of the lawmakers believed that since it was a tax measure, a bill should emanate from the House and the usual process should be followed, he said. With Norman Bordadora

Why spy on RP? It's normal, says US diplomat

Front page A1

"We should be more concerned about what the government of other countries are doing to us even if they're our friends," he added.

It's normal

But US Charge d' Affaires Darryl Johnson said that his government's analyses of the political situation in the Philippines are considered "confidential information."

"It's normal ... It's an analysis of a country's political situation," Johnson told reporters in an informal interview during a media reception sponsored by the US Embassy on Wednesday night.

Johnson was replying to a question on why the US government kept confidential information on the Philippines.

But Johnson stressed the US Embassy did not know what "confidential information," illegally obtained from the FBI, had supposedly been passed on by former police lawyer Nigel Michael Kay Aquino to three Filipino politicians.

The envoy also denied knowing who the politicians were, adding that he had learned more about the case from the Philippine media than from Washington.

Johnson also said that the relationship of the United States and Philippines will "continue, moving" to be affected by Aquino's case.

ESTRADA: I showed documents to Defensor and others.

LACSON: Yes, but the materials had already come out in the media.

GOLEZ: I also had my e-mails from Aquino and they were all clean.

PIMENTEL: I wouldn't be surprised if they're trying to implicate me.

Who's spying on whom?

A leftist group echoed the opposition's accusation the latest now facing Aquino and FBI intelligence analyst Leandro Aragoncillo. They proved the United States was spying on the country's internal affairs, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

While the KMP did not condone what Aquino and Aragoncillo did, they said the FBI must also account for its own spying activities.

Charge US with spying

"What is the FBI doing with these classified information in the first place? They have no business with our internal affairs," said KMP spokesperson Carl Arellano in an interview.

He said Filipinos should be gravely concerned about the revelation that the FBI was keeping tabs on their leaders.

"This has grave implication on both our public and private security. They must able to get data on us," Ala said.

"On this basis, it is the US that should be the one charged with espionage," he added.

Rosalind rejoices

Mary "Rosalind" Ong yesterday said she "feels vindicated" that the US government had detained Aquino, whom she had charged with kidnapping, murder and wiretapping in the Office of the Ombudsman, along with ex-police officials Cesar Mancao II, Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson and several other police officers.

"I don't have to lift a finger," she said in a text message to the Inquirer. "God worked in a miraculous way. (It) all caught up with him."

A former seminarista agent and ex-informant of the defunct President Ferdinand Marcos' Chief Task Force, Ong was told before the United States canceled her visa this year.

She said she was particularly hurt because she allowed the request—Aquino and Mancao—were free to the United States while she had been "travelling for five years" here.

Aquino and Mancao fled to the United States via Hong Kong in July 2000 despite a hold-departure order issued against them in connection with the Labor Day siege of Malacañang.

They had also been indicted in the abduction-slay case of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver, Manuel Corpuz.

Permanently barred from US

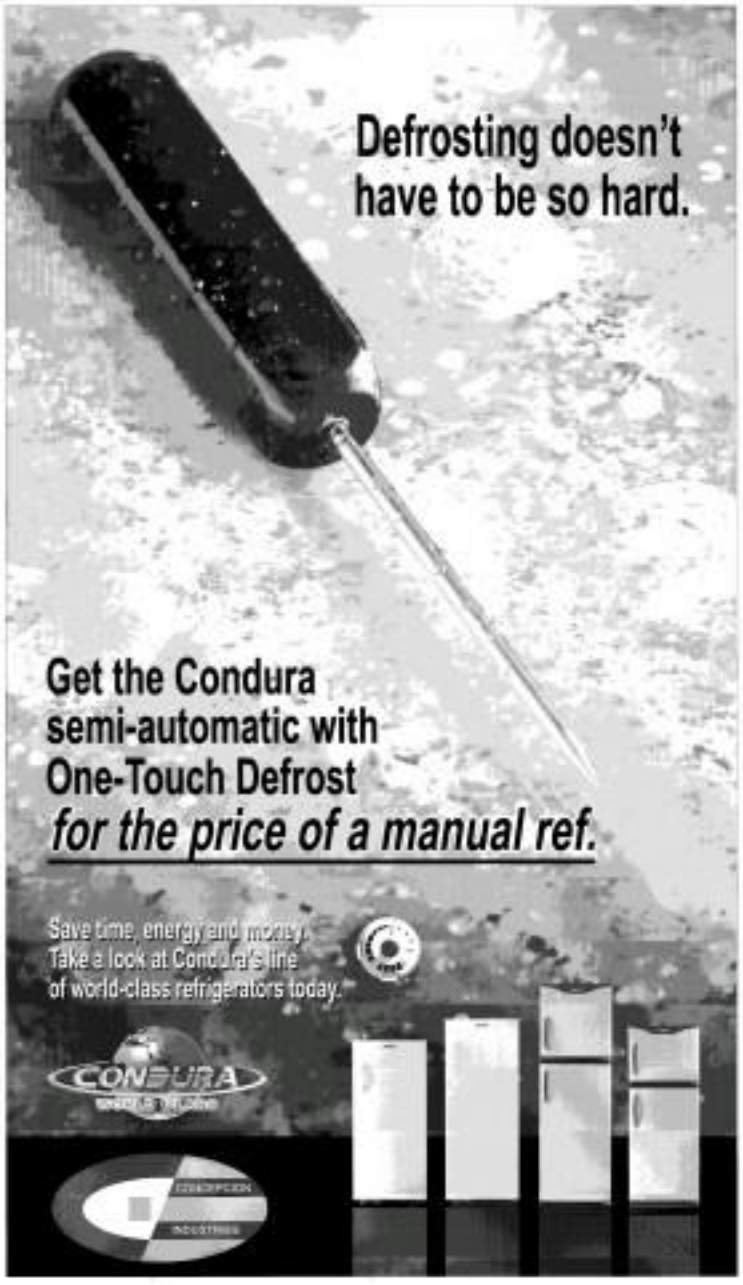
Tagged as a drug trafficker, US authorities had permanently barred Ong and her family from entering American territory. "I'm vindicated for one reason," Ong said.

"First, I charged Aquino (in the) Ombudsman for kidnapping together with Lacson in 2000. Second, my visa was canceled by the (US) embassy."

During a visit to the US Embassy, Ong said she had tried to explain to a consul that she was, in fact, the complainant in drug and kidnapping cases against top police officials.

But the consul denied her a visa all the same.

Now she has one more prayer—that the US government cancel Lacson's and his family's visas, too, if he is charged and found guilty of receiving classified information from Aquino. *With a report from Tonette Orejas and Inquirer*



Correction

IN THE SEPT. 14 issue, a headline on Page A6..."Navy says he: Gen. Lacson"—misstated the name of the accused powerful who is facing charges of unexplained wealth and perjury. Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo on Tuesday ordered the filing of the charges in the Sandiganbayan against retired Armed Forces comptroller Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot...not former AFP finance chief Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia. The new charges have been filed against Garcia who is currently undergoing trial for plunder.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for corrections or factual errors in writing to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, 3rd Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati-Mandaluyong Sts., Makati City, fax Nos. 897-4192/896-6214, e-mail address: dailyinq@inquirer.com.ph.

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RP not ready for biochem terror attack, says PNP exec

By Luige A. del Puerto

DON'T TELL THE TERRORISTS, BUT THE Philippines is ill-equipped to cope with a biochemical attack, like sarin gas, in a public place.

Simply put, a ranking police intelligence officer yesterday said: "We're not prepared for it."

The officer said no police unit has been trained to respond to a gas attack, such as what happened in Tokyo's subway system in 1995. That attack, perpetrated by members of a fanatical cult, killed twelve persons and injured 12,000 others.

He said the government did not have the equipment to contain, handle and transfer toxic chemicals like sarin in cans.

"We also don't have chemical suits and not many gas masks," he said.

The only good thing going for the country is that local and regional terrorist cells have not shown interest in a biochemical attack, he said.

Quoting data from the intelligence community, the officer said there "is no indication yet that terrorists are planning or intending to use biochemical weapons."

"They prefer to employ bombs, because their commodity is clear as explosion looks better," he said.

The country, however, must be prepared for anything, including a biochemical attack. Describing terrorism as a "man-made disaster," the officer suggested that part of the government's calamity fund be used to buy equipment and train personnel on how to respond to a biochemical disaster.

The country already has a bomb data center, which analyzes bomb signatures and trains local explosives and ordnance experts.

Fed up with the help of the Australian government, the center has investigated some of the biggest bomb attacks in the country, including the Valentine's Day bombings this year and the twin bombings in Davao City last month.

Intelligence officials had earlier said the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror network had established training bases in Mindanao. The JI reportedly has close ties to the homegrown Abu Sayyaf terror and bandit group and the homegrown terror network Rajah Sulaiman Movement (RSM) headed by Hilarion del Rosario Jr. and Zulkifli bin Hir, a.k.a. Marwan, a Malaysian bomb maker.

The officials said Indonesia was the JI's "rear front" while its fund-raising centers were in Singapore and Malaysia.

Last month, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said several JI members had been spotted in Mindanao and Metro Manila.

He warned they may have been planning attacks in several parts of the country.

SC junks pleas vs House ruling on impeachment

By Armando N. Nicasio

THE SUPREME COURT SAID IN THE SECOND time dismissed as "premature" the petition of lawyer Dioniso R. Francisco Jr. asking for a review of the House of Representatives rule that only one impeachment complaint can be filed against an impeachable official.

The high court also denied for "lack of merit" the motion of lawyer Oliver Lozano, who endorsed the first impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo, asking the SC that he be given more time to file a petition to "nullify the justice committee report" of the House of Representatives.

In a resolution dated Sept. 13, the high tribunal said it dismissed Francisco's petition "for being premature as no motion for reconsideration was filed with the House of Representatives."

Francisco filed the second petition after the House justice panel voted to throw out the three impeachment complaints against the President. The House affirmed the panel's decision.

The Supreme Court also earlier junked Francisco's first petition questioning the constitutionality of the provision in the House rules limiting to one per year the filing of an impeachment complaint. The SC said the petition was filed even before the House justice committee had decided on the matter.

In a second petition filed last Sept. 6, Francisco asked the court to declare the House rules on impeachment unconstitutional, particularly the provision that prohibits the filing of more than one impeachment complaint in one year.

"The ruling that an impeachment proceeding is deemed initiated by the mere filing of an impeachment complaint and its referral to the committee on justice is clearly susceptible civil abuse and will effectively shield a corrupt, impeachable official from impeachment," Francisco argued.

"If that an impeachable official needs only to avoid being impeached is to merely ask somebody to file a sham impeachment complaint or a complaint which one easily be declared tyrosh, cited in form and substance and have it endorsed by an ally representative," he said.

Francisco is the lawyer who coined the making of the so-called "Francisco ruling" or "Francisco doctrine." This was after he and 15 others succeeded in filing a petition in November 2003 seeking to nullify certain provisions of the impeachment rules and bar the second impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

GMA joins world leaders' appeal vs terrorism

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Law which we opposed after 9-11," Ms Arroyo said.

Practical to get US aid

"To develop our anti-terrorism capacity to prevent terrorism, the Philippines has also found it practical to accept American assistance for our ongoing defense reforms and seek for Philippine law enforcement reforms."

Ms Arroyo endorsed the US-backed Proliferation Security Initiative where countries would consent to interdict any vessels or aircraft reasonably suspected of carrying suspicious cargo, specifically weapons of mass destruction.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan told the gathering of kings, presidents and prime ministers that despite some progress, negotiators had failed to achieve the profound overhaul of UN policies and institutions he sought.

He reminded that in many areas, including enlargement of the Security Council, members remained deeply divided. "We have not yet achieved the sweeping and fundamental reform that I said many others believe is required," Annan said.

WITH A PROTECTIVE HAND on her shoulder from the world's only remaining superpower, President Arroyo is set to make history as the first woman and first Asian to preside over a Security Council meeting.

BRITISH PM Tony Blair exchanges pleasantries with President Arroyo, Philippine envoy to UN Lauro Baja is second from left. Retired Mali is the British ambassador to the UN.

Biggest UN challenge

"Our biggest challenge and our biggest failing is on weapons proliferation and disarmament," he told the opening session of the three-day summit, which has turned from ordering reforms to highlighting the world body's difficulties.

Negotiations on a summit declaration this week failed to agree on sensitive disputed disarmament proposals from Norway and South Africa, backed by about 50 nations. The United States objected to calls for nuclear disarmament but did support regional nuclear-free zones in Africa and Asia, and a ban on the export of arms to non-governmental groups.

[illegible] ing unconventional weapons.

French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin served a reminder of the topicality of the issue, warning Iran that it faced referral to the UN Security Council unless it met its obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Breakthrough

Tehran insists it has the right to enrich uranium for what it says is a civilian nuclear program, but Western nations suspect it of a clandestine drive to develop an atom bomb.

The foreign ministers of France, Britain and Germany are working a meeting with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Thursday in what could be a last ditch effort to "test the temperament of Iran's new leadership" on the matter in case a European diplomatic deal fails.

Annan said it was a breakthrough that the international community had agreed for the first time it had a responsibility to intervene to protect civilians against genocide, war crimes and crimes [illegible]

The billions of people still suffering from endemic poverty in various parts of the world must also be included in the UN's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals that include halving extreme poverty by half by 2015, Annan told the gathering.

The summit was overshadowed by a scandal over abuses of the Iraq oil-for-food program in Iraq.

UN corruption scored

Bush referred obliquely to the scandal, saying the United Nations must be "free of corruption, and accountable to the people it serves" and practice the high moral standards it preached.

He also insisted the United States was committed to the Millennium Development Goals, despite Washington's earlier demands that references to the phrase be deleted from the summit document. And he pledged to bring all trade subsidies if other countries did the same.

Tanzanian President Benjamin William Mkapa said it never occurred to him that the UN institutions would have problems in agreeing to eradicate poverty.

"When a junkie jet crashes, we will rush in with assistance but we forget that each day 30,000 children die unnecessarily from poverty-related preventable causes—equivalent to 100 jumbo jets crashing every day," Mkapa said.

In a veiled criticism of the United States, the world's richest nation, Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende said the European bloc agreed to boost development aid spending but "we need to see more equal burden-sharing."

Most of the delegates spent their times meeting each other, including a handshake between himself, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, whose nations have no diplomatic relations.

"I was standing and he came in a group and he jumped the group and he shook hands with me," Musharraf said. "He asked me how I was. I asked him how you are, and that's very good."

First Asian to chair council

Ms Arroyo is the first Asian and the first Philippine leader to chair the most powerful UN body under a rotating arrangement. She wore a bright red suit that made her stand out among a sea of black and gray suits.

She held her head high as she mingled and shook hands with the various leaders of the world's most affluent countries. President Bush gave her a peck on the cheek, a hug and a pat on the back, before she proceeded to the senior chair to open the summit meeting.

Ms Arroyo was poised and relaxed when calling out the names of leaders speaking their turns to express their views on proposals for tougher anti-terror measures.

In a briefing for representatives of American financial services giants JP Morgan and Credit Suisse First Boston, she stressed the need for her to regain public confidence in the Philippines after escaping a move to impeach her for allegedly stealing last year's election.

"I realize the trust I need to gain with our people if we are to move ahead with political and economic reforms," said Ms Arroyo.

She maintained that her poor [illegible] were largely due to economic rather than political factors.

Filipino impatient

"The problem of course is that current economic growth is resulting for too few people," Ms Arroyo said. "Those are the kind of poor people who have rightfully low patience with the political leaders and their individual circumstances."

Despite her responsibility, Ms Arroyo said she had the strength to [illegible] the economic reforms needed to improve the country's fiscal position and attract the interest of foreign investors.

"My agenda is the right agenda and the people recognize that. The problem is that for every two steps we take forward, we take one back. The gains are too easily eradicated by the setbacks or dominated by [illegible]," she said.

With the preparations now over, Ms Arroyo assessed that she was "politically stronger" to put into place the reforms the economy needed. Reuters

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Mike A misses Gloria most but he's not yet coming . . .

Front page A1

all to take off some of the heat bearing down on President Arroyo.

When asked what he missed most about the Philippines, Arroyo in a heartbeat replied: "Gloria."

"I miss [my] mom staying to go back [to the Philippines] because I miss my family, but I don't know when. I'll go home," said Arroyo in an ambush interview shortly after President Arroyo presided over the largest ever gathering of heads of state at the 60th anniversary of the United Nations.

But the First Couple's son, Arroyo Miguel Arroyo, is expected to stay there a bit even more. "I don't know. Hilary's plans but I believe he is being asked to remain. But I still don't know why," the elder Arroyo said.

The President was alone with her close friends yesterday when she flew to New York and checked in at the St. Regis Hotel on Sept. 14. The First Gentleman, who was in New York as early as Sept. 12, was first seen with the President at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel for UN President George W. Bush's dinner that same day.

He said his family hosts the hosts of the political crisis buffeting the President just for the sake of the country. But seeing his wife "miss[ed] attending one's gathering of the world's most powerful leaders at the United Nations Security Council, Arroyo said all the family's sacrifices of the past few months "were allowed it."

"I miss [my husband] of her the way she conducted the Security Council meeting. Now you can see. I think it's the first time that a woman conducted the meeting. It was very good. I'm also very proud [because] she's a Filipina," Arroyo said.

"She's strong and she's a good leader. She's a very smart leader, a smart person."

Arroyo said that he never thought that the President would go up the world stage and lead the UN Security Council despite the dark months that they had been through with former allies and Cabinet officials joining the opposition to seek her ouster.

On the point, Arroyo said the President's appearance at the UN Security Council was a vindication for the First Family.

Mr. Arroyo, however, did not share the same confidence as his wife in saying that the political efforts to oust her out of Malacañang. "I don't know if the [crisis is over]. Let's just leave for tonight," Arroyo said.

School owner a tax-evader, BIR charges

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE (BIR) today charged the owner-operator of private school chain St. James College with tax evasion as tensions mounted a fresh crackdown on those hiding behind the tax-exempt status of foundations.

As if to stress that the government's Oplan Isa Bayad Muna Para Iwas Pasakit Program has not lost steam, BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag announced that school operator James Torres — who also sits as president of the James T. Torres Foundation (JTF) — was found not to have incurred a total tax liability of P48.9 million.

Torres' St. James School system was composed of Quezon City, Antipolo and Calamba.

"This announcement is clear by our determination to flush out all tax evaders who resort to all means of tax dodging," Buñag said.

"As long as BATA is here, we will never stop running after suspected tax evaders in the country. BATA is now playing a pivotal role in this objective," he said.

BIR investigations revealed that JTF is the lessee-operator of the St. James College system based on the 30-year lease agreement entered into between Torres and JTF. The lease amounts to P20 million, payable a year in advance upon signing of the deal, with the lease to be increased 10 percent each year.

The BIR also found out that Torres was not declaring his total income. Instead, he was declaring the income of the school under the St. James College system.

Torres claimed he filed his income tax returns for taxable year 2000 but admitted he did not file a return in 2001.

The BIR said his ITR for 2000 indicated that Torres did not declare his income arising from the lease of his properties. He claimed tax exemption under the Tax Code provisions on non-profit educational institutions.

But BIR investigators said that Torres could not circumvent the law by claiming that the schools and himself were one and the same entity considering that the lease contract proved that he was representing himself in a personal capacity.

"JTF is a juridical entity and Mr. Torres should have filed a separate income tax return as well as VAT [value-added tax] returns for the covered income," the BIR said. The lessee noted that Torres was employing the scheme to enhance his tax-evasion tactics.

The BIR said that after evading taxes through the filing of questionable refunds, Torres was now attempting to evade the taxes by dubiously failing to give correct and accurate information in his 2000 ITR, where he failed to include income derived from the lease agreement.

The bureau argued that further non-declaration of the lease income of P20 million in 1998, P22 million in 1999, P24.2 million in 2000 and P26.62 million in 2001 was committed in a "fraudulent" failure under his declaration of income, and constituted prima facie evidence of false or fraudulent return under the Tax Code.

"What makes the tax evasion more pronounced is the clear showing of willfully failing to account as part of his personal income the lease income derived from the foundation and disguising the same as part of the supposed exemption being claimed in previous returns but it was here for us timely discovery," the BIR explained.

It said Torres' continued and unjustified refusal to give access to his books of accounts prompted a court action against him in Quezon City and the issuance of a warrant for his arrest. With no access to his books, the BIR said its assessment of P48.9 million liability was based on the "best evidence obtainable."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, September 16, 2005
24th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: 1 Tim 6:2-12
Gospel: Luke 8:1-3

Jesus walked through towns and country-side, preaching and giving the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve followed him, and also many women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases: Mary called Magdalene, who had been cured of seven demons; Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; Susanna and others who provided for them out of their own funds.

Commentary:

Here we are introduced to other disciples, who accompanied him from the beginning to Galilee to be preached and pass away the good news of the kingdom of God. Journeying through towns and villages was the way to evangelize women, some not named, others clearly singled out as disciples in their own right. Mary called Magdalene harbored her affections, because with of Christ, literally cleansed. Susanna and others who provided for him (the twelve). All told, there are another twelve named in the gospels, women (not counting Mary the mother). This is their company... about who they were, how they lived with Christ, life and scandal, and the struggle to bring the kingdom with. So we have twelve...each of women and men that form our company as we make our way to the cross and resurrection to die!

DFA never cancelled Aquino's passport after he fled to US

By Michael Lim Ubac

NEW YORK—CONTRARY TO the claim of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Michael Jerry Aquino's passport was not cancelled after he fled to the United States to escape prosecution for the murder of politician Eduardo "Bubby" Daza and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito, in 2000.

"He's a holder of a Philippine passport," said Cecilia Rehberg, head of the Philippine consulate here.

Rehberg's admission put DFA officials on the spot a day they had been claiming that the former police senior superintendent was an undocumented alien in the United States.

The Philippines' immigration and passport laws require the DFA to cancel the passport of a fugitive from justice.

Up to this moment, Aquino's passport is still valid, according to Rehberg.

Attorneys in the Philippine consulate told the Inquirer that Aquino's passport had already been cancelled, but it was recently renewed by the consulate for unknown reasons.

"She has a lot of explaining to do," said the sources, referring to this second passport.

The sources, however, refused to say whether the renewal of Aquino's passport had something to do with the supposed deal Malacañang had tried to forge a "tactical alliance" with Lacson in the 2004 elections.

Lacson ran for president in last year's election, which prevented the opposition coalition headed by the late presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. from unifying the anti-Arroyo forces.

In Manila, foreign affairs secretary Franklin Drilon said the government would extend all possible legal assistance to Aquino in his supposed rescue.

"We will ensure that his rights are protected," Drilon said in an interview, albeit without specifying the kind of assistance being contemplated for him.

The Inquirer learned from a source that the Philippine consulate in New York had started conferring with New York-based Filipino immigration lawyers and that they were looking into whether the FBI turned down Aquino and his entourage's arrest had violated his rights to privacy.

Drilon could not confirm this finding in a report from the consulate, but he said he was confident "they will send somebody" to assist Aquino and that "that's a right his lawyers are invoking." With a report from Volt Contreras in Manila

Imelda: These are all mine, stop auction

Reported by:
MARLON RAMOS
Inquirer Visayas

Fe Ina Cimatu, a longtime associate and secretary to the former first lady, was said to have written the note attached to the 121-carat red stone encircled by small diamonds worth $200,000.

It partly explained the provenance of the fabulous collection of jewelry estimated at $10 million earlier by the government when the Marcoses fled during a popular revolt in 1986 at the end of a 20-year rule.

Inquirers were allowed a rare glimpse yesterday of the treasure seen as the Imeldific loot as Filipinos then reports are now entertaining before a planned sale in November by the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG). Proceeds will fund the government's land reform programs.

The PCGG is tasked with recovering ill-gotten wealth from the Marcoses; it has so far returned P67.2 billion of the loot to the national coffers.

Marcos, 76, who faces dozens of criminal and civil cases, filed an opposition at the Manila Regional Trial Court yesterday seeking to block the sale of the jewels.

"These are all mine," she said. "Please stop this. This is too much repression." It was ridiculous, Marcos said, for the government to say that she was unknown to buy back the jewelry at auction.

Amazing

Smarting, but amazing," said PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede. "I have seen more valuable pieces than these (but these were memorable pieces. It's different when you see them up close and (when) they're 80s. Marcos once wore them."

Abcede showed only part of the Marcos collection—around 400 items confiscated by US Customs when the Marcoses landed in Hawaii after they fled the Philippines.

Some 200 pieces were left behind in Malacañang. Another 60 were seized from Concepcion Industries, a Cash scattered at the Manila airport as he was fleeing the Philippines.

Among the jewels presented by Abcede were two tiaras encrusted in diamonds and pearls; 2nd gun-shaped pendant; 2nd gun-shaped brooch; 2nd gun-shaped brooch; 2nd gun-shaped brooch

Private donations to fund US lobby firm, says Gonzales

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG Solicitor General Alberto Gonzales yesterday said the government would use private donations and not public funds to pay for the services of a US law firm he had contracted to lobby for US funding of various government projects, including constitutional amendments proposed by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Gonzales, under fire from both administration and opposition legislators, clarified that the Washington-based law firm Venable LLP was hired primarily to follow up US aid and funding for "many ... decisive matters" and that money for the Palace had no bearing on the 1987 Constitution was just muddled time.

Back from a trip abroad, Gonzales told reporters that he was ready to face any congressional inquiry and explain why the government had hired the services of Venable LLP.

Opposition lawmakers had sought an inquiry in Congress upon learning the US law firm would be paid $15,000 a month by the newly-scrapped government. They also felt that the contract was tantamount to meddling in the Philippines' internal affairs.

An administration lawmaker said it diminished Philippine sovereignty while the opposition branded it downright treasonous.

Gonzales said the decision to hire a US lobby group came after he brought up to Ms Arroyo the issues of aid programs.

"We're looking at certain grants, aids, programs between the two countries, and my own observation is that many of them are not forthcoming when they should be coming already. I thought that we should look into the situation there and the national priorities in the US so that you get a lobby group," he said.

Gonzales said Ms Arroyo and some other members of the Cabinet were aware of the contract and granted the President an oath of confidentiality.

He said servicing US funding for Charter amendments was added to the contract after representatives of the US law firm asked him whether there were other US grants that Venable assisted.

Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra called on the government to restart the contract, stating, "Should we amend the Constitution so it would begin like: 'We, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of Uncle Sam...,' he added.

Sweet smell of . . .

The Department of Agriculture yesterday announced plans to plant 10,000 hectares to durian and 30,000 hectares to bananas within 10 years.

Agriculture Secretary Joseph Yaugenthat announced the proposed durian and banana expansion during the Mindanao Fruit Industry Conference in Cagayan de Oro City.

He said the plan, contained in the Southern Philippines Roadmap for Investment (SPRI) listed the country's exports, particularly from Mindanao, which had shown much potential in the development of its fruit industry.

Mindanao was the biggest producer of fruits last year, accounting for almost 70 percent of the country's total fruit production and contributing $505 million from exports, according to DA data.

Key to growth

"The department always believes that exports hold the key to sustainable economic growth," Pangandaman told the Mindanao fruit industry Council and the Chamber of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Industries of Northern Mindanao during the conference.

"We are confident that you share our watch, your industry will be assisted of the DAs all-out support on all fronts," he said, adding that the government would facilitate market opportunities in the European Union and other countries for the banana chips and fresh fruits products.

"The durian, which is known for its pungent smell has a sweet taste, is a relatively new phenomenon in Philippine agriculture.

Its commercial production started only 10 years ago.

In 1998, only an estimated 17,000 hectares were planted to durian.

Most of the durian produce is consumed domestically as fresh fruits, while the rest is processed into ice cream, candies, jams and juice.

Durian accounted for a "small and irregular" portion of exports in the late 1990s, contributing a measly $12,000 annually according to the Philippine Fruit Network.

Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are the world's leading producers of durian. In the Philippines, the leading producers are Southern Mindanao, Western Visayas, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Central Mindanao and Caraga.

Cluster approach

Pangandaman said the DA would adopt the cluster approach used in most of Southeast Asia for the fruit industry similar to what the government employed for the Fox and corn industry.

"I am confident that by using this cluster approach, we would be equally if not more successful in this endeavor," he said.

He said the DA was willing to provide soft loans facilities to help fruit exporters, especially in Southern Mindanao where there is much potential but little capital for farming.

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Shaw Blvd. – 631-0000, Boni Ave. – 633-0000

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Guerra

Suicide bomber kills 16 in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—A SUICIDE BOMBER KILLED 16 IN Baghdad on Thursday, a day after a wave of similar attacks left 150 dead and al-Qaida's frontman in Iraq Abu Musab al-Zarqawi declared all-out war on the country's Shiite Muslims.

The policeman was among the dead in the rush-hour attack in the southern district of Dora that triggered an emergency response police patrol truck. Twenty-one people were wounded.

Another eight people were killed in other attacks across the country including four policemen, and three Shiite pilgrims who were gunned down as they were walking from Baghdad to the holy city of Karbala.

A Shiite imam or religious leader was killed and three people wounded when a bomb blew up near the gate to the Buratha Al-Wadi mosque in the main northern city of Mosul, police said.

Three unidentified bullet-riddled bodies were also discovered in the north of the capital.

The latest wave of terror followed the deadliest day of attacks in Baghdad on Wednesday since the US-led invasion against Saddam Hussein's regime in March 2003.

Zarqawi's group claimed responsibility for the series of car bombs, saying they were in revenge for a US-Iraq crackdown on insurgents in the northern town of Tal Afar, near the Syrian border.

Zarqawi, a Jordanian-born Islamic extremist who is Iraq's most wanted man with a 25 million-dollar bounty on his head, also declared "all-out war" on Iraq's majority Shiites, according to an audiotape posted on the Internet.

Many civilians have been increasingly targeted by Sunni insurgents or hardliners within the ousted elite over their anger on the long oppressed majority that now leads the government.

"Any religious group that wants to be safe from the blows of the mujahideen (holy warriors) must disavow the government of Ghazi Yawar, Minister Breaking Jaafari and its crimes. Otherwise it will suffer the same fate as that of the crusaders," according to the tape, whose authenticity could not be verified.

The term crusaders refers to the occupying US-led forces that ousted president Saddam Hussein in 2003 and which back the elected government.

Zarqawi's group the al-Qaeda Organization in the Land of Two Rivers is considered responsible for some of the most spectacular attacks in Iraq as well as the kidnapping and beheading of foreigners.

Zarqawi

Britain's The Times newspaper, quoting an unnamed US intelligence officer, said that Zarqawi has placed insurgent groups in Baghdad under his command.

"We have got reason to believe that al-Zarqawi has now been given tactical command in the city over groups that have had to merge under him for the sake of survival," the official said.

An intelligence summary cited by The Times said that of an estimated 16,000 Sunni insurgents, 5,700 were hardcore Islamic fundamentalists supplemented by 6,000 members after an amalgamation with Jaish Mohammad—formerly an insurgent group loyal to Saddam's ousted Baathist regime.

A US military spokesperson in Baghdad, Lieutenant-Colonel Steven Boylan, acknowledged that the rebels remained capable of upping the level of their attacks.

"They have the ability to cause a spectacular event at the time and place of their choosing," but "this does not mean that every thing has turned in a bad way," he said.

"The leader in (Zarqawi) tells, the more trouble he's in," General Western officials suggested Wednesday's attacks were ordered in response to the offensive in Tal Afar.

"We've seen similar spikes in Baghdad when they have terrorist attacks in other cities in the past, specifically Fallujah," said one.

"It's very clear Zarqawi wants to create a sectarian war," he also said, adding that it was important that both the government and the Shiite majority showed restraint. "So this does not become a civil war." Another Western official suggested that, even though this was the first time Zarqawi had openly called for all-out war, the country was "already in some respects in a civil war situation." On the face of the attacks, US President George W. Bush and close ally British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in New York for a UN summit and the General Assembly, pledged to "not (be) the job through" in Iraq. AFP

Watchdog slams US forces for media deaths in Iraq

NEW YORK—A MEDIA WATCHDOG criticized the US military on Wednesday for consistently failing to investigate the killing of journalists in Iraq by its forces, and said the Pentagon was losing credibility as a result.

The report by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, or CPJ, said US troops had killed 12 journalists since the US-led war started in March 2003, and at least 40 others in operations which killed 436 in the conflict.

"Several of the US deaths suggest indifference by US soldiers to the presence of civilians, including members of the press," the CPJ said in a statement.

The report also examined the deaths of 21 journalists and support staff who were killed in Iraq, run by US forces.

It said that in most cases, the US military had either failed to investigate journalists' deaths or it had not made its inquiries public.

Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Bill Hall said he had not seen the report, but rejected the CPJ charges in response to questions from Reuters.

"The US military investigates every credible report of a journalist's death in which US forces may have been involved.

To suggest otherwise simply does not reflect the facts," Hall said.

"The findings from the few investigations that have been released have not credibly addressed questions of accountability for shooting deaths, and whether US forces are taking necessary measures to differentiate between combatants and civilians in conflict areas," the report said.

At the three-month mark, Reuters cameraman Waleed Khaled was shot by US forces as he was driving with a colleague on an assignment. The US military has said the action of its troops was "appropriate" in the biggest incident.

Reuters cameraman Bassim Kadhem, 24, like Waleed an Iraqi, was slightly wounded but survived in the passenger seat of the car, only to be detained for three days by US troops.

The CPJ report said the US military had not yet published its report on that incident.

"By failing to account for all shooting deaths and demonstrate that it is taking steps to avoid future tragedies, the US military shows an alarming disregard for the safety of civilians, including journalists covering the conflict," CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper said.

"As far as we know the military has conducted full investigations into only a handful of incidents and made public its reports on just two of them. With such a record like this, I again invite to address its own serious credibility problem by showing some accountability and by providing real answers to outstanding questions about these shocking deaths." Reuters

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Ophelia batters hurricane-weary US

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA — Hurricane Ophelia lashed the US state of North Carolina on Wednesday leaving floods, cutting power to about 300,000 people and menacing storm fears in a country still numbed by the memory of Hurricane Katrina.

The North Carolina governor declared a state of emergency and pleaded with the public to heed evacuation orders as the seventh hurricane of the Atlantic storm season strengthened and moved along the coast of the southeastern state.

With its eye about 22 km off the coast, the storm was lashing it with winds of about 110 km an hour, according to the US National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Authorities said the windy had already torn down power lines, cutting electricity to an estimated 300,000 people in North Carolina. Weather experts said that flooding which started during the day could get worse.

Ophelia was moving so slowly, about 13 km an hour, that it could buffet the state for two days before easing off, said Gov. Mike Easley.

Many inhabitants on the Outer Banks holiday islands off North Carolina headed for shelters on the mainland as powerful winds and torrential rain pounded their homes and businesses.

With US authorities still reeling from criticism over the slow response to Katrina on Aug. 29, Easley told the public: "If you have not heeded the warning before, let me be clear right now: Ophelia is a dangerous storm that is likely to cause flooding from storm surge in rivers and sounds."

The federal government, which has felt the political backlash from Katrina, took no chances.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had about 250 specialist workers in the state already, the governor said. The National Guard had nine units a force of about 300 troops in the area considered most at risk.

The Homeland Security Department said several hundred tonnes of water and ice and dozens of trailers of emergency meals had been prepositioned in several areas around North Carolina.

It said the Defense Department had also put troops and specialist engineers on alert to take part in any emergency operations and extra medical teams had also been warned.

Easley said there could be a storm surge of up to 3.4 m and 25 cm of rain in a few hours as well as hurricane force winds.

Katrina threw up a storm surge of 7.6 m in some places along the Gulf Coast on Aug. 29. More than 700 people have already been confirmed dead in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida and Alabama, and the search for bodies is ongoing. AFP

Study: Norvasc cuts heart deaths

NEW YORK — Results of the landmark Anglo-Scandinavian Cardiac Outcomes Trial (Anoct) showed that patients with high blood pressure and additional cardiovascular risk factors who received a treatment regimen based on Pfizer's calcium-channel blocker Norvasc (amlodipine) experienced significant reductions in cardiovascular death, all-cause mortality and other cardiovascular events, including heart attacks and strokes, compared to patients who received a standard beta-blocker based regimen.

Pacious overseeing the Norvasc-based regimen experienced a reduction in the primary endpoint (fatal coronary heart disease and nonfatal heart attack) which did not reach statistical significance due to the trial stopping earlier than expected. The Steering Committee of Anoct confirmed the first safety and Monitoring Board decision to stop the trial early.

"The results of Anoct clearly demonstrate that a Norvasc-based antihypertensive regimen can reduce the risk of cardiovascular death and a broad range of cardiovascular events in patients with hypertension who have additional risk factors," said Professor Peter Sever, lead principal investigator, clinical pharmacology and therapeutics, Imperial College Cardiac Clinical Research Center for Clinical Studies at Luton and General Hospital.

The five-year Anoct study, which was one of the largest hypertension trials ever conducted, involved over 19,000 patients in Europe who had high blood pressure.

The trial compared the cardiovascular effects of a Norvasc-based regimen versus a standard beta-blocker-based regimen in reducing cardiac events in patients with hypertension and multiple cardiovascular risk factors.

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Bush presidency defined by 3 crises

By Ron Fournier

PRESCOTT — IT'S MIDNIGHT IN CRAWFORD, Texas, and President George W. Bush is on vacation, the poll ratings are slumping, the Iraqis are angry, and the country is divided.

It's the August 2005 version of August 2001.

The scenery is both. Historical similarity will judge Bush's presidency based on his leadership through two tragedies — the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and Hurricane Katrina — plus a conflict of his own design: The war in Iraq.

Katrina's lethal aftershock revealed that the Bush administration did not learn valuable lessons from the 2001 attacks about responding to disasters. So far, the president himself, since the Sept. 11 terror strikes Bush seems to have lost his touch for connecting with an anxious public.

"This is someone who has staked his presidency on strong leadership through crises, and now he has faced three major challenges," said Charles Franklin, a University of Wisconsin political science professor. "Sept. 11 fundamentally altered what this administration is going to be remembered for, which is the response to terrorism, the Iraq war until now, obviously, Katrina and the aftermath."

GEORGE W. Bush (right) and first lady Laura Bush. AP PHOTO

The key was to indeed to both Sept. 11 and Katrina, a bridge of acts between the two crises. It began as part of the Sept. 11 inspired war on terror and now competes with the Gulf of Mexico coastal disaster for money, manpower and public support.

Back in August 2001, Bush was coming into his presidency and trying to figure out why his job approval rating had declined since his inauguration by 15 to 10 percentage points. Voters still knew little about Bush and were getting restless.

On that day, he was given a secret document warning that al-Qaida hoped to attack the United States with hijacked airplanes. Dismissed by Bush aides, the memo referred to evidence of terrorists possibly using buildings in New York.

Critics now accuse Bush of not making terrorism a priority before Sept. 11. Supporters say he could not have prevented the attacks.

Either way, Bush's initial response to the strikes was shaky, personified by a grim-faced address to the nation that night. He quickly gained his footing and won favor with Americans when he stood atop a charred fire truck in New York and roared vengeance.

That bullhorn-wearing event occurred four years ago Wednesday.

Bush could use a defining moment like that now. Katrina caught him flatfooted in Texas. He seemed slow to the levees of power and took more than two weeks to acknowledge his own responsibility for the government's sluggish response.

They came this stunning concession from Bush: Four years after Sept. 11, Katrina makes him wonder whether the country is ready for the next terrorist strike.

"Are we capable of dealing with a severe attack? That's a very important question and it's in the national interest that we find out what went on so we can better respond," he said.

Several members of the nonpartisan commission that investigated the lead up to Sept. 11 said it looks like little has changed in federal disaster planning since the attacks on New York and the Pentagon. A former Republican, Senate Gallon of Maine, said the Katrina response was plagued by confusion, command, criteria failure and widespread lack of coordination ... all of which should have been dealt with by capacities post-Sept. 11 changes.

This could become Bush's legacy. According to various independent polls:

- Two-thirds of the public think he could have done more to help Katrina's victims. More than half say he deserves blame for the slow response.
- Fewer than half say Bush has strong leadership qualities, down from 60 percent in October 2004.
- More than half say they don't trust Bush's judgment in a crisis.

AP

Director Robert Wise dies at 91

SAN SEBASTIAN, SPAIN...ROBERT WISE, director of top Hollywood musicals "West Side Story" and "The Sound of Music," died overnight in his Los Angeles home, days after his 91st birthday, an official of the San Sebastian Film Festival said Thursday.

The death of Wise, last seen over the festival, which was scheduled to pay a special homage to the director who also made "Star Trek: the Motion Picture" and collaborated closely with Orson Welles.

The official said Wise's wife Mickhewa, who had been in San Sebastian to present the retrospective of his work, had left for Los Angeles.

Born in Winchester in Indiana on Sept. 10, 1914, Wise joined the movie industry in 1933 and by six years later had become one of Hollywood's leading film editors.

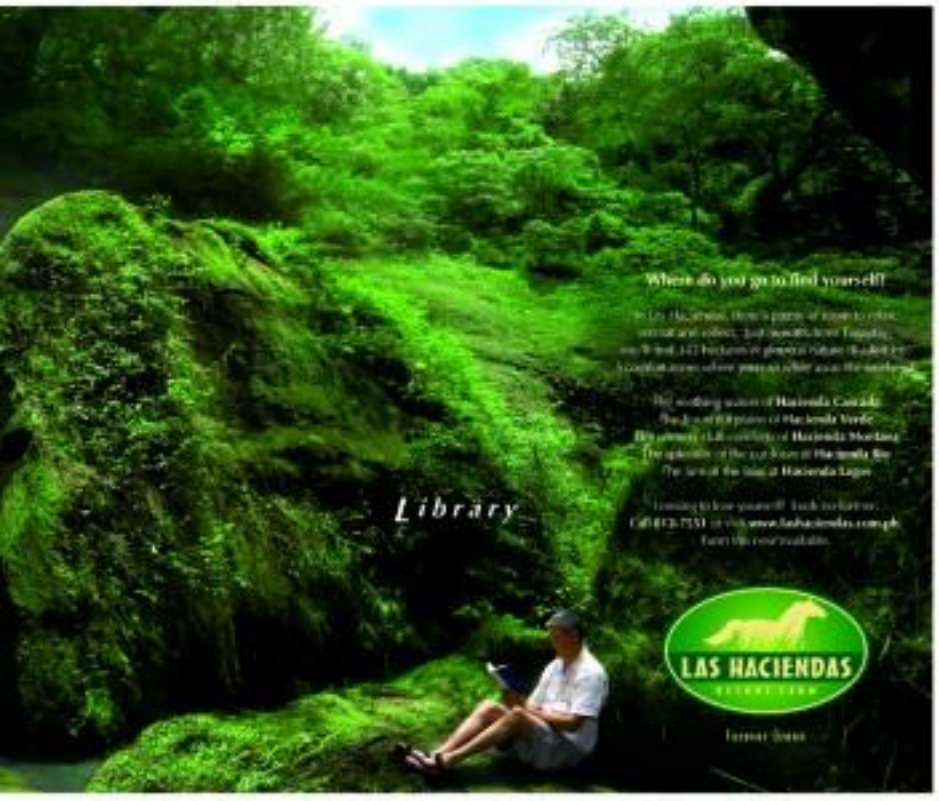
He worked on Welles's "Citizen Kane" and

WISE

"The Magnificent Ambersons," as well as Dmitri Shostakovich's "The Gadfly" and "The Fall of the Romanovs."

"West Side Story," which he co-directed with Jerome Robbins and won 10 Oscars, and "The Sound of Music" were seminal Hollywood musicals, along with the latter-known "Stac."

Wise also had a penchant for war movies, with "The Desert Rats," "Run Silent, Run Deep" and "The Hunt for Red October," and science fiction, making "The Day the Earth Stood Still" and "The Andromeda Strain" before "Star Trek." AFP



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Cloak and dagger

EDITORIALS

SEN. PANFILO LACSON IS FEELING UNEASY THESE days. The arrest of Michael Ray Aquino—once a close associate of his at the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission—in the United States for espionage seems to have put him in the line of fire, and apparently the senator expects the Arroyo administration to look him to the case. "The government officials' statements seem headed in my direction," he said.

Indeed, the President's men, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez among them, were quick to provide basis for his anxiety. Gonzalez hinted that the alleged espionage might have a connection with the political opposition's efforts to unseat the President. But given Gonzalez's penchant for making knee-jerk remarks, he would be the wrong person to lend credibility to Lacson's claim that Malacañang would link him to the espionage rap.

To be sure, however, Lacson's possible connection to Aquino's alleged espionage in the United States has been in the back of the mind of any one who follows the news. But people are giving the senator and the opposition the benefit of the doubt, and Lacson should not preempt the outcome of the inquiry by American authorities. He should not risk politicizing the issue.

But trust Lacson—or any Filipino politician for that matter—to consider an alarming development in purely personalistic terms.

Friend or foe?

BUT WHILE WE MAY SUSPEND JUDGMENT ON the role of the senator (or any other Filipino) in the meantime, we cannot ignore the security and geopolitical implications of what has happened. Aquino, who fled in the United States to escape charges linking him to the murder of publicist Bubby Dacer during the Estrada presidency, is alleged to have received classified documents from a Federal Bureau of Investigation intelligence analyst, Leandro Aragoncillo, a Filipino American who has also been arrested. More specifically, Aquino received intelligence materials that were the product of American espionage on the Philippines, particularly against the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ironically enough, all of these developments are taking place as the President is in New York to preside over a meeting of the United Nations Security Council. Thus, the episode is cast essentially as embarrassment for Lacson—at least not at first blush. It is an embarrassment for Washington and Manila.

Manila's responses to the incident have been rather lame, even apologetic. We don't know if Gonzalez was in one of his more raucous, dense moods when he wrote the US Justice Department to provide the Philippines "more complete information" about the espionage case as the documents could be "detrimental to our government." Perhaps, Gonzalez worded the letter mildly in a bid to be diplomatic. In meetings with reporters, he explained that the documents could be linked to "current destabilization moves in the country."

But exactly because the classified materials are "spied" information, they could open a Pandora's box and destabilize and damage the government and the nation. As such, a stricter message should have been delivered to the US government: The Philippines will not tolerate espionage conducted against its officials by a country which claims to be an ally and a friend.

It behooves Washington to come clean on the nature of the classified documents that Aquino has allegedly obtained from the FBI. It should as well explain why it spied—if indeed it did—on a friendly state, nay, an ally on the same level as a State country, if we are to believe US President George W. Bush when he hailed the Philippines as such after My Arroyo expressed her full support for the US war on terrorism. Why then was the FBI collecting information about the Philippine government—information that may have become fodder for the opposition's restless and challenge and quest to topple the administration?

Unless Washington makes a credible explanation, Filipinos will have to trace themselves for further shocks in a shadow play that has become more and more shadowy. It's a play right out of the pages of a John Le Carre or Len Deighton novel. Except that this one's for real.

GMA'S many secret deals

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LIKE PILATUS washing HANDS, DEAL WITH THE Devil (except that the rules in this modern era have been revised), President Macapagal-Arroyo seems to be desperately preparing deals in order to stay in Malacañang. Rep. Heherson Alvarez revealed that it was an emissary of GMA who went to her mother to assign her wife she offer as many as four Ayala Corporation or the Lihuegan ng mga Hayop to exchange for the support of the Alfonso forces. A little bird told Joe that one stalwart (both indicted Miss) of GMA went apparently to Tanay to offer President Joseph Estrada's freedom in exchange for the resignation of his congressmen against impeachment.

The bird said Little Miss (Defensor), like a drone in the parable that a Virgin Tanay sister, resigned as she demanded Pendatun wish the office of Speaker (or half) or an occupancy if he would order the congressmen of his party not to exercise impeachment. Much as he wanted freedom, Estrada resisted the temptation, the bird added.

Then Rep. Benjamin Mike Abalos (MIKEE) also went to Tanay and made the same offer, the bird continued. This time, all Erap was asked to do was shake hands with GMA on stage, in full view of the public, during the EC Manifesto prayer rally at the Luneta. Obviously, the purpose was to give the impression to the public that the two presidents had reconciled. Erap reportedly told Mikee like he would think about it. Actually, he didn't want to be written among enemies of GMA.

On the night of the rally, instead of going down to the site, Erap had his car parked at the Dusit Thani (Makapagal Boulevard), where he stayed while waiting for EDSA to burn. GMA trained and trained for him, eager to show the people that not only Erap had become friends but also that he was forced to leave when it became clear the forces were not going to show up while she was there.

After she left, as Erap ads in the rally showed him time the same was done, and Erap went to the Luneta, only to find his supporters in the wild throes of the rioting. That was why GMA stayed at the rally much longer than the time allowed to her (she was waiting for the President she deposed illegally) said Erap promptly showed up, as if by coincidence, after she had left.

"I have already been detained more than four years," the kind quoted Erap, "and I am confident the Sandiganbayan would grant me bail as I have already proven many times that I am not a flight risk. Besides, the evidence against me are very weak. Long-faster or not a few more months to be free, for the people will come into heaven, even long after I'm dead, if I make a deal and reconcile with her."

Nevertheless, the deposed President still had a generous heart for her—and has not lost his sense of humor.

"If GMA is detained like me," (she is still the bird talking) "she is welcome to stay here in the Tanay estate (...) have the light-heater for her room." And one day for allegedly "good behavior" he said Erap.

It is either the policy or a habit of the GMA administration to make deals and spend money recklessly behind the backs of the taxpayers footing the bill. The contract with the American lobby firm Mcauliffe to lobby the U.S. Congress to lessen and suppress a Democratic change in the Philippines is just the latest of these secret deals. There may be others that are still undiscovered.

Despite the claim of National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales (the man who signed the deal) that the contract is "legal," many lawyers say it is illegal and that Gonzales—and whoever authorized him—are liable criminally. The Philippines will pay Mcauliffe $75,000 (what's in dollars, approximately more than P4 million) a month. There is no such appropriation in the budget. Spending funds without appropriation is illegal.

Translation is National Security Adviser. What is he doing meddling with a political exercise like Charter change?

And what is the concern of the United States in changing the Constitution of the Philippines? Isn't that meddling in the sovereignty of another nation? The Constitution is a sacred document of any nation, like the Bible, so why are we allowing another country to meddle in ours? For doing what he did, Gonzales is leaving dangerous precedent.

But it is not difficult to surmise why the United States is interested in our Constitution.

A new Constitution will open our country to exploitation by American carpetbaggers under the guise of "investments." Our land and natural resources are reserved only for Filipinos under the present Constitution. But a new Constitution, written under the supervision of the Hegemonic nation (Yuri Kochiyama's term for the United) will open up the country to Americans, just like what the Platt Law did to our ages.

What this means is that Filipinos will be deprived of their birthright in favor of foreigners. They won't be able to acquire lands for their children, despite our wars to defend, and bankrupt Filipino business—corporations that would not be able to compete with the giant American firms.

* * *

KRITIKAN HOTLINE: Unanimous most Member's Cayetano to Manila are Rep. Imee Marcos, vice-presidential candidate Loren Legarda, and Rep. Rodolfo Plaza. Topic: What else?

Banishing politics from the Edsa Shrine

PASSION FOR REASON

René C. Pangalangan

WHEN MIKEE CIAM, RHODA FERNANDO refuses impeachment processes in Inner Edsa and regroup instead at the wide road leading to White Plains, for some of the commentators, her use "time, manner and place" (TMP) regulations. When Church authorities ban political activities from the Edsa Shrine, they invoke their rights as private property owners, and someone not the member of known law the owner of Cinema 1 or Trinoma, it is obvious that a law that is constitutional "on its face" can still be unconstitutional "as applied."

The Constitution says "the law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech...or the right of the people [assembly to associate] and petition the government for redress of grievances."

The regulatory power (or "police power" as it has existed in old school lingoism) is greatest when the regulation of speech is "content-neutral." I.e., when the regulation has nothing to do with the message of the speaker. Rally permits must be given attention or not the valiyans love President Macapagal-Arroyo. Under the Bill of Rights, the state may not establish the government's preference or make laws favoring one politics they oppose. Except when existence is imminent, government has no business saying what may or may not be uttered.

TMP regulations are the quintessential example. Government's only right here concerns not limited to time ("Will the rally cause traffic at 5 p.m.?"), manner ("Will there bonfires here a public?"), and place ("Are they too close to a school or hospital?"). Commercials, rally permits are never usually denied, but only rescheduled, reconfigured, or relocated. Authorities are particularly solicitous to TMP because the "speech" elements [i.e., the message] is often detached by the "non-speech" elements [i.e., the traffic, litter or noise].

Nevertheless, the real problem is that Edsa is a public road and, legally and historically, has served as a "public forum" much like Plaza Miranda of old. The public forum doctrine, often whipped, raises the bar for content-neutrality. It is no longer enough that the regulation be content-neutral. Regulators must also be narrowly tailored to avoid collateral damage to speech and must "leave open ample alternative channel for communication." Fernando has cleared that bar. Why block Edsa? Manila's main artery and passenger traffic with in a 20 kilometer radius, when you can simply divert the evilness to the side road adjacent to the People Power Monument?

His real problem is that the People Power Monument is part of the People Power Shrine. The plain but symbolic meaning. That symbol is inseparable from the message. For instance, the Supreme Court has upheld in an 8-5 (!) ruling to close traffic in front of the EJS Building, and not in the Ritual football stadium as the city government had wished. There is to Edsa, the "place" was part of the message, and shifting the venue would not be a content-neutral TMP regulation.

The Edsa Shrine is actually an even more difficult case. Over the years, church authorities have shown no and cold on whether the area can be used for political protests, and little to attract police have infringed the owners' wishes. For quite right. The property rights of the owners are fundamental to property itself. Any narrow carved to the adjacent sidewalk, which is either outside the property line, or is subject to an "easement" for public use. One of those ultimately sees is for freedom of assembly, in which case we are back to Jernandez "public forum" doctrine.

Just like the Monument, the Shrine is also a symbol of the 1986 upheaval; therein, place is the symbolic message. In our landlord's life, the shrine exemplifies of symbolic speech was when the Sanggunian closed their window at Pegod Lenny. Their message: We defy colonial control. Their act: Tearing a piece of paper. That symbol was unique to its moment—but meaningless to ours. Try tearing up your cedula today, and the only message you convey is that you want to blot up an City Hall till area again—and pay.

Making trumps religious freedom. Tawyas that is, when Church authorities themselves allow political activities within its sacrosanct premises. How many times has the Shrine hosted supposedly spiritual gatherings with overt political activities? When the Shrine's designated altars were ripped and lost others, when the sacred altar of Cursillo by the rosary was "spirit"? Constitutional law tells it the act of "good faith belief." In a recent law-era case, the high court stopped anti-Marcos forces who encouraged to, of all places, St. Jude Thaddeus Church (right next door to Malacañang) during Mass to pressed! (The protesters should have claimed they needed St. Jude, patron of desperate and impossible causes! Seven then right for not being true believers.)

Filipinos love their issues unless mysterious, their symbols often in faith. Those who never-ending campaign to save spiritual emblems to wage earthly battles. The lawyer-poet Archibald MacLeish said: "In age forsworn an age ... when witnesses poets in their pride leaves emblems for the world's conceit ... It perishes when [symbols] thoroughly seen, for impressive moves." I fear long before Edsa will become so moot!

* * *

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OPINION

Islam as a tool of modernization

A DAY AGO IN IRAQ AND YET IT IS NEVER MIDDLE East is that Islam and modernization are opposites. But Malaysian history over the past three decades shows that this belief is simplistic. In fact, Islamization has proved to be an effective political means of counselling the leaders of Malays in the country's rapid economic development.

In the early 1970s, when it was still an overwhelmingly agrarian country and Islamization was just gaining momentum, Malaysia embarked on a program of industrialization. Its leaders signed on help the majority Malays gain a bigger share of the country's wealth. After three decades of spectacular economic growth, many Malays have become prosperous and content not only with their economic lot but also with their identity. But no longer do some of the country's bruised sense of Islamic identity, and schools — for the most part — embraced modern, secular curricula. Of course, paradoxes appear every now and then, such as the globalization's side-effect of alongside demands for stronger censorship.)

Islamic mindset politicians such as Anwar Ibrahim gained prominence when authoritarian took off in the 1970s. But the latter also possessed a secular, liberal and cosmopolitan background, which perhaps a moderating economic policy that took care of Muslim sensibilities.

Anwar took the grass roots populism of Dato' Seri Mahathir Mohamad, the then prime minister. Mahathir Mohamad decided to accept Anwar into his United Malays National Organization (Umno), the dominant party within the country's ruling coalition. The strategy worked well for Umno. It was able to co-opt the Malay middle class into the ranks of the party. But in this wrenching changes that accompanied the country's rapid economic modernization.

During the 1990s, however, Anwar increased his influence within the party, unwinding many of the reforms he had put in place after the 1987 financial crisis, when Anwar, the deputy prime minister, adopted an even more economically liberal approach than Mahathir. Partly in response to this challenge, Anwar was ousted.

Anwar's bizarre trial and sentencing on charges of sodomy and abuse of power navigation, and the political maneuvers, is growing, are his no and anti-Mahathir sentiment took hold among Islamic-minded Malays. This culminated in post-election results for the ruling coalition in November 1999.

The Islamic party, Pan Islam Sebahagian (PAS), took power in the states of Kelantan and Terengganu and strongly threatened Umno in other northern states. The personal conflict between Mahathir and Anwar thus led to an apparent coup into between Malaysia's Islamic political forces and the modernizers of Umno.

So, once again, Mahathir felt pressure to adopt a strategy aimed at preventing Islam from becoming a tool of opposition. This impulse strongly influenced his decision of a succession which he decided to step down as of the summer. His choice of Abdullah Badawi, the relatively polite minister, helped bring to the Islamist neutral high ground that the PAS had been claiming.

From the beginning of America's global "war on terror" in 2001, however, this brought the political march of the Islamic parties on a wrenching halt, as it provided an excuse for the government to crackdown on the Islamic right and the DPS.

But this only removed Umno's deeper economic need as multiethnic identities. So, before wrapping Anwar, Mahathir — to his to declare Malaysia as the Islamic state. Spokesmen were raised and questions were asked about the lengths to which Malaysia would go to ensure set this identity appear.

This is my opinion. Time of Badawi's first are after taking over as prime minister in October 2000 was to introduce the concept of "Islam Hadhari." The name term was finally floated out in September 2004 through a list of 10 principles, all but one of which, however, was without any great controversial. Never before, has there appeared to be all that was needed for Islam-related courses as to return to the field of the ruling Umno.

In the general elections in March 2004, after three days Mahathir stepped down after 22 years in power — moderate Muslims helped Mahathir to a landslide victory.

The triumph of Anwar soon afterwards raised the new premier's prestige further as a leader who would lead Islam-Malay and secure Muslim coalition.

Since then, Abdullah has been popularizing the concept of Hadhari, shaping it as a means to shift Islam's focus from less accommodating functions to its civilizing potential and vendoring it less ideological. In Malaysia today, Islam is being presented as a guarantee of civilization and culture, and not merely as a source of religious inspiration. All this has helped to reduce the political tensions dramatically and provided a conceptual platform for moderate Hadhari. Islam Badhari tries to present the idea that Islam's moderation and universalism do not necessarily mean Islam.

With various forces and strategies, Malaysia has effectively managed the tensions between a secular, modernizing agenda and the Islamic faith that the Muslim politics. By making Islamic and Malaysian a complementary part of the process of modernization, Malaysia demonstrates that Islamic faith and economic growth can be successfully if politicians are clever enough not to cross certain contradictions.

Syndicate

Ooi Kee Beng is a fellow at Singapore's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and coordinator of its Malaysia Studies Program.

Missing Haydee

AT LARGE

Rhoda Jimenez-David

---

about their hobbies.

We happened to take part in the same conference in Phnom Penh some years back, and I remember both of us running amok at the shocking exodus of the teachers who were fleeing hotness from China-ridden for an incredible $1 each. Haydee was planning a trip to the United States and Canada to visit with family, and she slog through the pile of blouses with exuberance, showing pictures of what she'd bought.

What she displayed in real for the Senate, the women's party list 'alumni' Pinay "carried" her, on the strength of bringing her on a speaking tour around the country where voters, once they got to know her and see her in the flesh, were invariably charmed. That the party-list was generally respected and was immediately recognizable even in airports at the airport, refused to have anything to do with celebrity politics or glamorosity and was thus no match for movie stars or media figures.

The other demanded of political parties that they measure up to the same standards she set for herself. After the elections, she scoffed that for her Presidente Ronaldo had talked to her rarely in the campaign, promising just a session, and also disappointed with his party's direction she would have made it. But even while she found Ronaldo likeable, she said she ultimately decided against joining his line-up because they differed on too many basic issues.

* * *

Of all the phone calls of late, my favorite was one of Haydee's that were some taken during a "recess" for her organized by friends to civil society while she was undergoing chemotherapy for ovarian cancer.

She had been whacked out of her room and, to acknowledge the friends who came to pass her, had been slapped on a bit of blush and lipstick her such women's wan, tomato-ey smile. Haydee had never looked more vulnerable or insecure.

Yet as fierce, ailment to ours as she was discharged and judged fit to resume her duties, she pressed her mission in the PCSO, even if, judging by her voice, contemplation, her soul was no longer marshed by an administration willing to compromise even its avowed principles for political security.

* * *

HAYDEE was part of the face-shrinking events of public figures who, by the time Nonoy Aquino was assassinated in 1983, had already established themselves in their professions and thus had much more to risk by taking on the Marcoses. Though she had by then established a reputation as a formidable law professor, she only once, it was alleged when her then-interns could not accompany, Haydee was not exactly known as an activist, though she earned her stripes as a human rights lawyer before going to the universities as professor and dean.

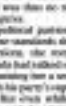
She reached with other professionals — academics, business leaders, doctors and dentists, ordinary employees — Haydee provided the nascent protest movement, until then peopled only by leftist activists and opposition politicians, important credibility and respectability. It needed credibility and reassurance to the rest of the surrounding of the dictatorship for fear for of the abominations.

Of course, there is a painful on the situation that she and her beautiful deaths have to leave what Haydee thought of this current imbroglio. But something tells me that she would not have been hesitant to peripheral issues like necessary alternatives or the lack of coherence within the broad coalition forming against GMA. Haydee was the sort of person who would have turned in on the current mess of attack and consequences, right or wrong. And that is why she will be missed. We could certainly do with her fiery presence right now.

Culture education

LOOKING BACK

Anthony R. Oculanjo



ONE REASON WHY CULTURE IS CONFUSED IN so many misconceptions is that it is not fully integrated into our basic education curriculum. For instance, we have separate subjects in school for literature (or history) of English, Science and Math. Where you speak of culture, it is lumped into a strange creature called Values, which is incongruous, irrelevant and boring to children. Culture is often associated with the arts and is perceived social that means drawing, music or dancing, rather than teaching children that culture is that which differentiates us one race and whatever man-to-be. Therefore we should not be surprised that our culture shows in the moods and people we have today.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts has been working on a Philippine Cultural Education Plan (PCEP) for the past five years, and it is supposed to be a program that will be integrated a cultural index in three volumes, one of them as thick as a phone directory. While I browsed through the bibliography and discovered in its contents and treats me as an academic, I asked myself if this monumental work on a matter so vital to our future is being given to the Gentlemen. With some preparations, perhaps the PCEP could be implemented by the Department of Education.

The task is simple. In the six years that a child is in school, he is taught about what we should learn from by rote? How 10 books should they read aside from "Noli" and "Fili"? What 10 films should they be able to sing aside from "Bayan Ko," the National Anthem and "Ang Bituin"? What 10 songs should they be able to sing aside from radio-play? These seem to be some topics that will inspire something common to all students throughout the archipelago and form a body of knowledge that will make them know and appreciate what it means to be Filipino.

I wouldn't be surprised if pre-school children today can recognize Ronald McDonald, Jollibee or the Pickled Mouse's mascot on sight but not know Fernando Amorsolo or Abelardo de Rivera. Perhaps they know more about Mother Goose and Harry Potter than Lam-ang or Maiting Maiting. Growing up a lot of cultural items is gone, only commercials, but we have to start somewhere.

Whatever film premiered the PCEP is an interactive group in the Delphi Southeast Education Council, we insisted that culture should not be isolated in Hekasi. Culture should be taught across disciplines, which can be modern grammar, why it's so slow for teachers to make history examples of missionary missions when we have a gold mine from the prime and poetry of Nick Joaquin, Amado Hernandez, Virgilio Almario and our other luminaries. Antonio Luna's temperament was not a product of his color, we can get examples from the works of Amorsolo and Juan. When we teach geometry shapes, we can ask students to work them out in the abstract motifs of Guerrero and Luz. Only when we start to integrate culture in subjects will people see culture in their everyday lives.

Culture can provide Filipinos with a context in which to see themselves. Culture will give us room to balance an education that primarily looks at the West. Culture will help us avoid the illusion that our history began that Father Philippines lost their senses chosen to a headhunting expedition from Ferdinand Magellan's Kingdom. While we understand that we cannot isolate the cultures being offered in Hong Kong, one should take what happens to the subway tunnel over years of hard work and cleaning. Instead for classical ballet, our dancers will not even be recognized as Filipinos because they will be inside a Mickey Mouse or Daisy Duck costume. Have fun, have fun, but remember

A generation before ours, Filipinos who were abroad in such greater numbers aimed to make their hostile and come home to enjoy the fruits of their labor and sacrifice. What I find disturbing these days is how people who plan on work overseas have little or no intention of returning. Now that is a lot more than.

I am also disturbed that think Joaquin 50 years ago was quoted as saying, "There is so much negativity in this country we should export it." When you look at the country today you realize that we are supporting our host and neighbors. Seen that is something to worry about. Why is our nation's character lost a location and the chance to perform "Bayan Ko" in the Cultural Center of the Philippines is become a dancing cacop in Hong Kong Disneyland, that is terrible indeed.

Culture is important. Without a stronger generation of dancers have moved up to Ballet Philippines to wear the shoes of the senior dancers who we hope will only be to Disneyland unsuccessfully. Where the headbangers from Hong Kong would have nothing to sing but "Bayan Ko" because they do not have their version "Ah wasn't-to-dance." This is the difference when people have room to their chest songs. Maybe those young people have both songs and room.

Furthermore, only are provides an opportunities for heritage and the environment, but have heritage to Senator Barpan and Ted Failon and take an example of culture and environment. What when you visit these stunning sites can to museums and learn about the history of the Philippines, consider Rizal's Philippines, Hispanic Legacy. "This manner was made from a 200 year old tree". Culture should teach us to care for the environment and see the work of the ancestors into the area Boulevard Road to Baguio. The day that we have a Filipino who can explain the engineering of the Cry of Pines a day that when culture has taught us to see the difference between what is real and what is not.

* * *

Comments are welcome at anonymous@inquirer.edu.

Honor

SEPTEMBER IS USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH MARIONS' dedications of martial law back in 1972. I am sure citizens in our remembers Sept. 16, the date we secured ourselves from Mother America, when the Philippine Senate rejected a proposed treaty to allow US bases to remain in the Philippines.

I'm writing to you not just about the need for memory keeping, one that goes beyond the commemoration of dark events and defeat.

(For example, the Battle of Bataan). Memory keeping must include the fact that the former are most up, most cost personal, as we said on Sept. 16, 2001, memory keeping is not just confirmation, but also participating their contemporaries.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Town and Spain

To understand what that logic. At decision entailed, we need to recall what the US bases represented. The bases were set up as part of the American colonial occupation of the Philippines. In the right of the 20th century we allowed the American to only term what we regained our independence in 1946, supposedly because the bases would help protect us from outsiders. The bases, in fact, played essential during the Korean and Vietnamese debacles, in the deployment of US troops and ships, and in providing rest and recreation for war-weary GIs.

These US bases were the largest outside the mainland United States, with Clark Air Base alone having enough parking space for some 200 planes. In 1990, the bases employed some 60,000 Filipinos, making the US government the second largest employer in the country after the Philippine government. In short, the bases made some $200 million a year for the country.

We need not to recognize the impact of the bases on our national psyche. Neither does seeing the bases as examples of US military aggression, or come to think of ourselves as a helpless victim. Arguably, the interactions or defendants of Filipino servicemen's and families.

For reasons to believe the bases were close to defend us, or to the bases were there to counteract external or of American might. The bases were, literally, US real estate, above our laws. When GIs would "accidentally" kill Filipinos, they would be flown out of the country for trial.

The bases were there to remind us, too, of the American "good life," exemplified by "PX" goods from the commissaries. The goods eventually trickled their way out of the bases, or Angeles, to Cubitan, to which people would rush back like religious pilgrims, to get a bit of immersion in Otso-cookies, Spam, Pringles and the like.

"Amoy America [it smells like America]!" are would spend in delight, opening purchases of those goods from heaven.

Change' diplomacy

Alas, all good things come to an end. The bases treaty was to expire on Sept. 16, 1991. In the era of national sovereignty there should not have been an question about inviting the troops and asking the Americans to leave.

But realpolitik didn't work out that way. President Corazon Aquino was, like many Filipinos, very much pro-bases, convinced that they were good for the Philippines. The pro-bases side at least they were explicit: Aquino appointed a Philippine panel headed by Sr. Alfredo Bengzon, who was then the bank's secretary.

Together with Raul Rodrigo, Dr. Bengzon eventually wrote a book called "A Matter of Honor," detailing the talks around the bases. Here we get glimpses of the nagging, of the wrangling, of the tactics in the corridors of power, both here and in the United States. The head of the US Ambassador Richard Armitage and his "arch regime diplomacy" first nagging for billion a year for "rental." After Filipinos stood off in June 1991, he threatened the Philippine government that the "equation has changed," offering $660 million for the first year, and $360 million a year for the next nine years. The good ambassador must have had a lot of practice bargaining lower-range Persians.

But there was more to all this than money. The name of the game was US access and control. Early in the negotiations, Armitage expressed outrage when the Philippine panel floated the idea that the US could have access to a long-term "abandoned" of 50 to 75 years. They were also clear that the Philippines would "phase in" only during the last years of the treaties.

The US government knew they could bargain because on many of her officials were in on the debate about the value of bases. There was an ally inside Ojino Dee shops, including Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislao, who was close to Presidente and might as well have been part of the US panel, given the information they prepared. There was Ollie-gaps Mayor Dick Gordon, warning of dire consequences if the hated hated down.

Victory in defeat

Public opinion eventually turned against the US bases. Senatorial part by the members of the US-negotiating panel and by the flip-flops of the senate's leaders, including, sadly, the President.

When it became clear that the bases would not only the proposed new treaty, the President led a "pro-sentiment" rally at the camps. Government workers were bussed in to listen to speeches from pro-bases senators lambasting the anti-bases groups as "anti-American" and "communists." Bishop Teodoro Bacani declared in his opening prayer: "Bless all our senators and deal and bless. They have books of mass."

On Sept. 16, 1991, the Senate voted on the treaty. Former Senator Lorenzo Tañada, then 93 and ill, left his sickbed to go to the Senate. His son, Wigberto, was among the senators who were to vote against the treaty. Senate President Jovito Salonga had to cast the deciding vote. "I may be sick from Tuesday and it's now only possible, I would vote 200 million times, 'no'." After a short recess, he announced the final result: "By a vote of 12-11, the treaty is defeated."

Defeating the treaty was a defining moment: a true reform was raised up for national honor, a time of victory, overcoming our fears of walking without American or just talk.

Ideal now, we still suffer from the imprinting that came with the US bases. We prepared as all too well for the flood of imported goods under Uruguayan-ish enough, of course, the cut will break our US bases. Or we had that in the United States. We still suffer from the effects of rapid pull-out from US military bases, supposedly as lead up our own capabilities to fight insurgency and terrorism. And, it seems, we are still willing to contract US lobbying firms, paying them thousands of dollars to handle our political interests.

It could be worse though. In the aftermath of 9/11, if the bases had stayed, I can imagine our so-call base lovers much more involved in George W. Bush's global adventurism. The bases, in emblematic of our being an American neo-colony, would have made us more vulnerable to retaliatory attacks from Bush's enemies.

I don't want to let go of the bases, and we, as well as the world, are the better for it.

Transactional presidency

ELISEA MACDOGAL ARROYO

Augusto Sid Sid Augusto Sid Sid Augusto Sid Sid

Across the NATION

Kidnapped woman freed after a year

COTABATO CITY—A CHANCE ENCOUNTER with some 30 suspected kidnap-for-ransom gang members along the highway of Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao on Tuesday night resulted in the "accidental release" of an elderly woman who was kidnapped in Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat last year.

Supt. Abe Saranza, police provincial director for administration in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said police officers conducting patrol operation chanced upon the kidnap-perpetrators' vehicle, Toilla Casan, in Barangay Kinamon in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao.

A gunfight ensued but no one was reported hurt.

While the fighting was going on, Casan hid in the bushes until the suspects fled. He later discovered at the policemen and identified himself as a kidnap victim.

Saranza said the 66-year-old victim "lost weight, appeared haggard and very tired," and claimed that she was not harmed during her captivity.

Ransom

Four gunmen seized Casan from her store in Lambayong on Feb. 5 last year. The kidnappers had demanded a P5 million ransom but her family said it could not raise the amount.

But the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which is negotiating peace with the government, said it doubted that it was a legitimate operation, saying the encounter happened on a highway used, secured by a police outpost and a military detachment.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said he believes that the release was due to "monetary considerations," but he could not determine the exact amount that was paid for the victim's freedom.

"I believe less than a million pesos because this is clan's [task] head," he said.

Important thing

"Whatever it was, what is important is that Mr Casan is free and safe," Kabalu added.

Meanwhile, relatives of 10 junior Chinese trader Jimmy Ang called on authorities and local officials to help ensure the kidnap victim.

Ang, 43, was seized on April 6 in front of his home along Nova Dana Avenue in Cotabato City. His kidnappers, however, have not sent any ransom demand.

Officials have expressed alarm over the rising number of crimes in Cotabato City, including an increase in the number of kidnappings. Edwin Fernandez, Charlie Señase and Jaffar Ibrahim, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

Sayyaf into smuggling

ZAMBOANGA CITY—More than P10 million worth of contraband and firearms were recovered in a raid in Kalinggalang Caluang town in Sulu's Sulu Province, Brig. General Juanchor Sabban, 3rd Marine Brigade commander, said in a phone interview that the smuggled items and firearms belonged to the Abu Sayyaf. "Since they could no longer operate and conduct kidnappings, they are involving into smuggling and other illegal activities to sustain their operations," Sabban said. He added that they initially received reports from residents about the landing of a vessel with several fully armed men on the shores of Barangay Therong yesterday or Monday night. Sabban ordered the raid. "There was minimal resistance as most of the armed men have already alighted from the speedboat," Sabban added. The raid yielded assorted mounted cigarettes, 200 bales of used clothing, a M-14 caliber rifle with two cal.5mm light machine gun, M-14 rifle and ammunition. Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Upsilon reunion

BAGUIO CITY—The three-day Upsilon Sigma Phi grand reunion here dubbed "3 Cordillera Experience ... Parabhirang Fellowship" opens today (Sept. 16) with the "Alitaya" scene at the Saint Louis University auditorium here. "Alitaya," a love story of an Igorot boy and a privileged student from the lowlands, is performed by the SLU Rawtany Group and directed by lawyer Tarcisio Dangwat Jr. The musicale is produced by the Spouses Ogsos Pio, the oldest fraternity writer dubbed by the Philippine Normal Univ. The Philippine songs including songs, compositions and arrangements is done by Dick Lorenzo, lyricist Ellie Martinez and the late Teddy Yabut. Other activities, which are by Upsilon Sigma Phi Batches '55, '56, and '58, are a campfire night at the Camp John Hay clubhouse, golf and badminton tournaments, a culture fest, and a fraternity ball on Sept. 17 at the MCAP-Camp John Hay trade and cultural center.

Passport service goes mobile

CITY OF CALAMBA—The Mobile Passport Service (MPS) in Southern Luzon will start its processing trips on Sept. 26-30 and Oct. 1 at the provincial capitol complex. New applicants are required to personally appear. Processing of first-time applicants is not allowed. The fee is P750. The MPS was made possible by the provincial government and Association of Municipalities Inc. and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Mahmoud Ghafir, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Checkpoint mulcting hit

CITY OF TALISAY (NEG.)—The Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) will recommend an ordinance that prohibits checkpoint manned by barangay officials along the road, especially highways. The move started from Antonio Aurelio, councilor of Talisay City, an ordinance and saga matters chair. It is meeting on Monday will be extension. On Aug. 29, Provincial Care Council chair and Oriental Mindoro Bishop Warlito Cajandig sent a letter to the SP to act on the matter. Especially on this particular way of not to station a vehicle and say but a discernible sense this ordering highway drivers of their hard-earned income. Senior Supt. Marcos Pavia, Oriental Mindoro provincial police director, said the would send done them to his chiefs of police to put a stop to it. Mahmoud Ghafir, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Dead NPA exhumed

CITY OF CALAMBA—The body of Michael "Ka Ester" Sabiguero, a New People's Army guerrilla commander, was exhumed by relatives on Sept. 12 in San Francisco, Sablayan. Residents Medardo and Norman Abello, a staff member of the Social Services Commission Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose, Inc. Ralph Villanueva, 30MB Infantry Brigade commanding officer, said Sabiguero had died in the Aug. 25 encounter in Barangay Sta. Lucia, Sablayan, according to Sangguniang Mayor Lucio Gutierrez. A Magsaysay contingent of non-government organizations, Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), Bayan-Mindoro and Anakbayan, offered Sabiguero's cremation urge while his own comrades in the movement led the contingents without incident until Sabiguero was laid to rest in the ground that enshrined Gen. Josephine Narcisa Cabral. Mahmoud Ghafir, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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SPORTS

Red Bull ready to rumble

CLEAN LIVING
Manuel R. Diaz

BECAUSE THEY HAVE PREpared too long and trained too hard for the team's Philippine Basketball Association supremacy, Red Bull head coach Yeng Guiao and teammate Jun Limpot should run for taken lightly this season.

Starting with newfound formula, The Bandana, stars respect, showed enough impressiveness in beating sister teams Purefoods and Barangay Ginebra in recent tune-up games held in Batangas and Cebu, respectively.

"The team is ready," the 45-year-old Guiao said in an interview, adding that his players, including the recruits from the defunct Sta. Lucia squad, have been jelling well. "I'm not losing sleep these days. We're lucky in many ways."

But what pleased Guiao even more were the substantial attitude and total commitment of his charges and the all-out support of franchise owner George Chua and team manager Tony Chua.

Since joining the PBA in 2000, Red Bull officials have always eager to make the team come up with the highest level of performance not only to win games but also to earn the respect and appreciation of the public.

In the first round of the rookie draft last month, Guiao, picking No. 9 and last in the draft, selected 2005 NCAA Most Valuable Player Leo Najorda of San Sebastian, saying he was surprised that the 6-foot-4 swingman was not selected much earlier by the other teams. Then in the next round, Guiao picked scrapy of former Ateneo Eagles 6-foot-3 Larry Rosario and 6-foot-5 Bodie Ilagan—who were both teammates of now Red Bull swingman playmaker Villanueva in the Ateneo team that won the UAAP crown in 2004.

"Najorda, Rosario and Ilagan have blended well with the other members of their new team," said an elated Guiao. "Very early in pre-season chemistry and camaraderie is as short a time." He added those new players will supplement the workout of the team anchored on Villanueva, Asiong Intimatada, Lordy Tugade, Cyrus Baguio and double Taiwan import.

Guiao, who went back to back PBA Commissioner's Cup championships in 2001 and 2002, adds that standard Talk 'N Text, Alaska and San Miguel Beer as the teams most likely to give him the most trouble this year.

RP ice skaters 2nd in ISI world meet

A LEAN BUT MEAN PHILIPPINE TEAM GARNERED second overall in the International Skating Institute world recreational team championships held in Los Angeles, California, recently.

The young Filipino band was eclipsed only by a big contingent from representing Pasadena, California, in the six-skating competitions among 110 international teams.

Ana Gabrielle Dungorog led the Philippines' charge with seven gold medals, with Kristen Regina de los Reyes, Angelica Dungorog and Paulina Michelle Ong contributing five each, and Roxanne Dominique Pano and Bridget Joy Cupili accounting for four each.

Only 40 skaters in 10 represented the Philippines, compared to 106 plus delegations from various 11 teams.

Ana Gabrielle, who also won a bronze, topped the combined, artistic, footworks and solo compulsories in the Freestyle 7 category the same bracket where Pano captured four golds and three silvers in the technical and freestyle.

In all, De los Reyes won five golds, one silver and one bronze as she dominated the solo competitions and footworks.

Cupili won all four events he entered in the Freestyle 8 class, one more than the golden output of Jade Marrero. Bilvisions who nailed three gold medals and one bronze medal in the Freestyle 9 category.

In Freestyle 6, Francesca Dominique Serrano contested three golds, three silvers and one bronze while Angelica Dungorog won five golds, one silver and one bronze, with victories in the technical, artistic, and footworks events in Freestyle 5.

Aside from five golds, Ong also won one silver and two bronze medals in the Freestyle 4 category.

RIDE HIGH! Piano squatting in the technical event.

Fernando, M'temayor open Little Olympics

COMPETITORS IN THE HIGH school and elementary levels in the 2005 Mila Little Olympics kicked off with much fanfare in the Marikina Sports Park recently with Mayor Ma. Lourdes Fernando leading the guests at its opening ceremonies.

Fernando was accompanied by Mila bond manager Michelle Casado and Chairman Campaigner, the business unit director of Philippine Sports Commission, or Lcdr. Montemayor declared the Mila Little Olympics open following a colorful program involving performers from Marikina schools.

Trophies and cash prizes for the biggest delegations and loudest cheers were later handed out to the winning groups, spicing up the already lively festivities, also dubbed as 2005 organizer Joey Mancawal.

This year's Little Olympics offers close to P500,000 worth of educational assistance and sports equipment to the mall's sports competition's Most Outstanding athletes and its top 10 schools.

UM boosts stock with win

By Mari Reyes

RYAN REGALADO fired 20 points as University of Manila rolled to a 95-75 triumph over Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasay yesterday in the National Athletics Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Naasucu) basketball tournament at the UM Gym.

The Rarela, whose six steals was pegged at 66 by St. Clare last week, dispersed their record to 11-1 over to the Eagles' second, out of the race with a 3- 12 record.

UM, which will enjoy a seven-school recess before finals, led all the way with Orville Manito leading up Regalado with 22 points.

In junior play, defending champion UM reserved some sort of revenge against St. Clare with a come from-behind 81-79 win, while AMA Computer edged Better Children of St. Clare Montessori Center, 77-72.

Manila leg of San Mig Enduro tomorrow

IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO FOR THE ONGOING San Mig Light Adventure Series 2005 which kicks off its final leg tomorrow in the urban jungle of Metro Manila.

The Metro Manila leg, the last of three stages, is expected to be the year's biggest and grandest local adventure racing event with some 60 Orienteers vying for top prizes.

With the strongest ranks assuring participation, the organizers, led by race director Thierry Guerrero, have taken all measures to ensure the safety of the racers.

Guerrero said they have inspected the route and tried out the diverse tasks.

"Safety comes first," Guerrero said. "The safety of racers is guaranteed throughout the race since all security measures and precautions have been taken."

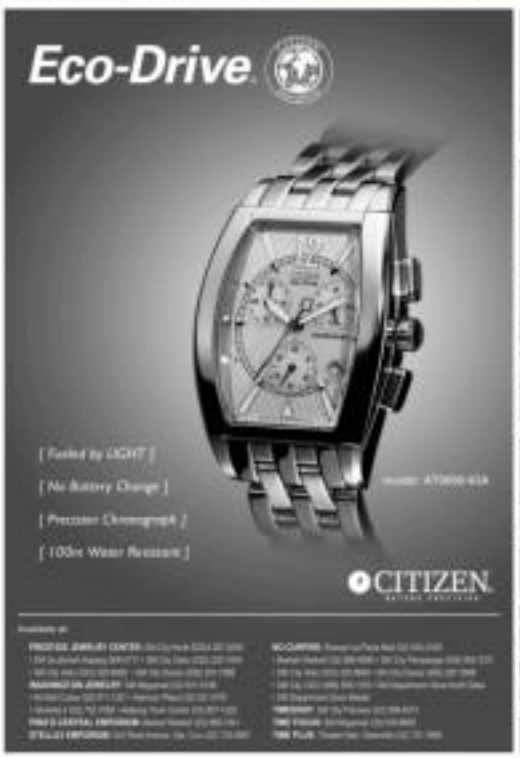
Aside from improving the race course, the organizers also provided briefings for the participants in the Elite category yesterday. Briefing will resume today for the Starter category racers at the Rizal Infantry Park from 7 p.m.

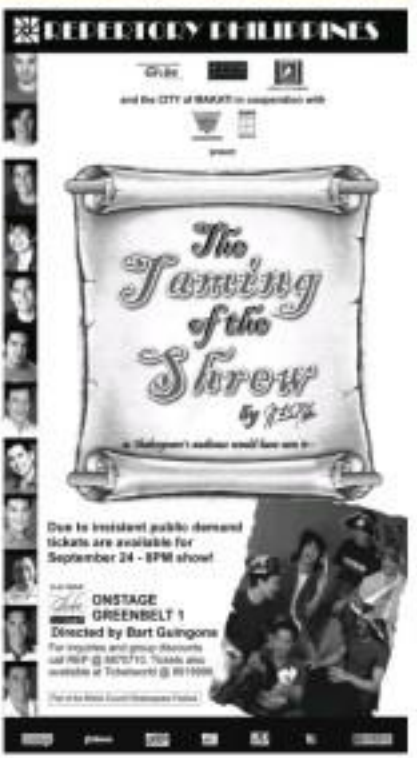
The Manila leg, which promises to be more exciting than the first two stages held in Baguio and Cebu, is sponsored by San Mig Light.

Major backers are Bombpond Gear, Body Wraps, Casio, Planet Infiniti, North Face, El Shaps, Deuter, Silkenpro, Gilligan's Island, Isdo's Strip, Gopear Bar and Grill, Bully's Store, Alpha Bite, Bumby's Medium, Gravity Grill, Hobbit House, Forbes Bar, Blue Room, Rolling Stone, Bedrock Bar and Grill, Dancer Bar and Grill, Mania 21, and Cari Noodle Restaurant.

Jay de Leon, president of Bombpond Gear and an avid adventure court himself, is seeing action in the Beginner category.

For race inquiries, call Endure at (0915) 414-1489 or log on to www.manilaplight.com.ph.





Senator seeks probe of coal-fired plant

MABALACAT, PAMPANGA—SEN. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. has filed a resolution directing the Senate committee on environment to inquire into the "dubious effects" of the construction and operation of the 50-megawatt coal-fired power plant of the Team International Power Corp. (Tipco) here.

In Resolution No. 1331, Pimentel cited public health, safety issues and an alleged flawed process in seeking an inquiry in aid of legislation.

PIMENTEL

According to him, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources issued Tipco an environmental compliance certificate on Sept. 6, 2002 "without public consultation."

The plant, located in Barangay Bamban, is 500 meters south of the Mabalacat municipal boundary, which the government built in 1993 for 45,000 people displaced by Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruption.

Pimentel said the people "are exposed to the ill effects of arsenic, mercury, lead, sulfur dioxide and chromium."

But Tipco officials allayed fears of environmental and health harm, saying the company had installed the best pollution-control technology.

Citing studies, Pimentel said that exposure to 0.002 gram/l of mercury was "sufficient to poison 25 hectares of lake water and all kinds of shellfish."

"The operation of a coal-fired power plant, he said, means environmental hazards to the ecosystem, among which include acidification, difficulty in locating potable groundwater sources, and decreased agricultural production.

Pimentel's action came after the Bataan Coalition against Tipco's Coal-Fired Power Plants, through a mass burning on Sept. 1 and a petition letter by the Bataklang on March, lobbied for the cancellation of the ECC issued by former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez.

They are the last group of residents to oppose the project. Most of them are from Bataan, a Philippine province located by volcanic landforms in labor in 1991. The Mabalacat town government has supported the project.

Among the issues for the council

[illegible] since he supposed drilled by Tipco and to subsidizing the Bataan Energy Corp. (Apec), on the project's schedule, according to the committee's chair, Senator Aquilino Javier Tarso.

The ECC issued by Alvarez contained a provision "automatically revoking" the project if it did not start construction and operation within three years.

Willie Ong, Tipco vice president, denied the lapse to schedule in a move by his company to seek an extension of the ECC's time of effectivity.

Ong confirmed that the first of the two power plant was 93 percent finished as of Sept. 2.

The contractors of Apec, the Power Wheelers Energies and Precision Heavy Industries, hoped to begin commissioning the facility by the fourth quarter of 2003, he said. Each phase costs P3 billion to build and operate.

Tipco, one of the biggest paper producers in Southeast Asia, expects the facilities to provide the company a cheaper source of electricity, Ong said.

Roberto Ordoña, PNO General Luzon Bureau

Customs says income from used cars in Subic down 97 percent

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—THE COLlection of P999,000 as safeguard duty on imported second-hand cars, which was the government's way of preventing the entry of used motor vehicles, caused the revenues of the Port of Subic from those items to slip by 97 percent, Customs Commissioner Alexander Arevalo said.

"The policy has effectively discouraged the import of second-hand vehicles. As P900,000, plus taxes and the cost of car, you would rather buy a brand new one," he said, referring to the new countrywide Executive Order No. 156.

Issued on Dec. 12, 2002, the order provided for a comprehensive industrial policy and direction for the government's motor vehicle development program. It also banned the importation of all types of used motor vehicles, parts and components.

The Court of Appeals in February this year affirmed the March 18, 2004 decision of the Olongapo City regional trial court to declare EO 156 unconstitutional and illegal.

As its motion for reconsideration was denied by the appellate court, the Office of the Solicitor General filed a petition for review on certiorari with the Supreme Court, where the case is pending.

Arevalo said: "The action you can see in terms of the vehicles is what I call policy calibration in action. The reason to say there was a policy on the entry of second-hand vehicles but then the government said that it did not achieve its desired goals in revenue or in managing the number of vehicles on the road, so they have to open some policy changes to ease it. If that is supposed to stabilize revenues."

Sen. Richard Gordon, former chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, had charged that the restoration of the EO was in exchange for the withdrawal of Rep. Mariquit Magsaysay's signature from the impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The supposed deal was reportedly facilitated by Zambales Gov. Victoria Magsaysay, the congressman's cousin.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye denied that Malacañang had an plans to revoke the EO. The two Magsaysays denied such a deal.

Governor Magsaysay said he did lobby for the revocation of the EO. In his letter dated Aug. 19 to resigned SBMA Chair Feliciano Lizarraga III, Magsaysay pressed SBMA officials to "make a firm and definite stand" on the imported motor vehicles.

In directing compliance of measures why, according to him, "Bad it is difficult to understand why our government cannot rely its own rules, order and mandate." Dexter Orejas, PEO Central Luzon Bureau

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OFFICIALS from the Southern Luzon Command inspect a pile of illegally cut logs discovered by soldiers in the eastern side of the Sierra Madre. DELFIN MALLARI JR./PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

₱8M in illegal logs found in Sierra Madre

LUCENA CITY—ARMY SOLDIERS, WHILE tracking down a band of communist New People's Army rebels on Friday, discovered piles of illegally cut logs with an estimated volume of 188.78 cubic meters worth P8 million in Sitio Balatkahoy, Barangay Cagsiay III in Mauban town on the eastern side of Sierra Madre.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr., commander of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar here, Quezon police provincial director Senior Supt. Victorio Caragan and other military officers flew to the area using Air Force helicopters and conducted an ocular inspection.

Cabuay pointed to the NPA rebels operating in the area as the protector of illegal logging operations in the Sierra Madre.

He said the rebels collect 20 percent from illegal loggers per board foot of fallen timber.

According to Col. Roland Detabali, commander of the Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade, his men were on patrol in Sitio Piapi when they discovered an abandoned NPA camp some 5 km from the log piles scattered in at least four locations in the area.

All logs bore marks with letters HB and two digit numbers.

The soldiers also apprehended a truck without a license plate loaded with timber, the driver and four of his helpers.

The suspects were identified as Nemesio Marquez, truck driver, his sons Niko and Nemesio Jr., Junior Romero and Rodel Locenia—all residents of Barangay San Antonio, Kalayaan, Laguna.

Marquez said the truck was owned by a certain Uoy Laganas, a co-villager.

He said they receive P2 per board foot of timber that they deliver to an area they called Ginabihan.

The logs would be pulled by carabaos to another drop area near San Antonio.

He declined to name the capitalist behind the illegal logging.

He said ready buyers of the illegally cut timber pay P10 per board foot.

Emrich Borja, Quezon provincial environment and natural resources officer, said the area was part of an industrial forest management agreement of Interwood, a logging firm with a sawmill in Mauban.

"But since the cut logs are bound for Kalayaan, Laguna, Interwood is a victim of timber poaching," he said, adding that Interwood does not maintain concession guards.

The average diameter of the seized logs is 20 cm.

Borja said the logs would probably be used as raw materials for "paleta" in several woodcrafts that started to mushroom in Laguna after the ban on log movements in Quezon.

Meanwhile, Caragan scoffed at Environment Secretary Michael Defensor for blaming the police for continued illegal logging in the Mauban side of the Sierra Madre.

He said Defensor should instead direct his tirades against his own forest guards and not at the policemen. ***Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Dad says Cotabato crimes on the rise

COTABATO CITY—While Maguindanao and other nearby provinces are experiencing relative peace, this city's security problem is getting worse.

"The situation here has worsened and residents are alarmed by the frequent killings and holdups," said Councilor Orlando Badoy, chair of the city council's police and security committee.

Just last week, a mother and a child were gunned down inside their residence in Barangay Rosary Heights 2; a man wielding an unlicensed gun was shot by a policeman inside a beer house; a number of civilians, mostly students, complained of mobile phone robberies; and houses are being ransacked by thieves.

Badoy said despite the city council's all-out support for the needs of the police, policemen appear to be remiss of their duties.

Senior Insp. Samson Obatay, police precinct 4 commander and newly designated head of city police operatives, said lack of mobile patrol cars and insufficient fuel have hampered police's round-the-clock operation. ***Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Population exec says vasectomy still unpopular

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Less than a percent of married men in Central Luzon practice family planning methods especially vasectomy, a national trend that has continued since 2003, a Population Commission official said.

There has been slow progress as few towns and cities, like San Fernando and Angeles in Pampanga, actually operate vasectomy centers on a regular basis, according to Rosa Fortaleza, Popcom regional director.

The region's biggest government-run hospital, the Jose B. Lingad Memorial Hospital, for instance, does not have a vasectomy clinic and a permanent staff to carry out the simple and nonsurgical procedure, said Dr. Juvencio Ordoña, regional director of the Department of Health.

In the region where 2.3 million of its 8.2 million residents are men between 15 and 54 years old, vasectomy or male sterilization is shunned because it is regarded as damaging to the "macho" image.

"That's the number one cause," Ordoña said.

Others have misconception that the method weakens sexual prowess, he said.

He and Fortaleza noted that the burden of reproductive health care among couples is still on the women.

At least 18.3 percent of women covered by the 2003 National Demographic and Health Survey in Central Luzon reported using tubal ligation or female sterilization, making it the most used family planning method in the region.

In Angeles City, the family planning campaign is making a headway among tricycle drivers. In a session alone, at least 15 drivers underwent vasectomy.

"*Pinapakita ko na mahal ko ang asawa ko* (I'm demonstrating that I love my wife)," was the reason most often cited by the drivers, said Fortaleza.

The DOH, Ordoña said, has not set targets in terms of how many men and women should avail themselves of sterilization.

"We advocate only couple's choice. We don't intimidate or give incentives," Ordoña said.

He said couples usually start using contraceptives after the first child. The same survey also showed that more women want to use contraceptives.

Supplies were expected to drop as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) begins to stop this year its subsidy for birth control pills and condoms.

It is in this light, according to Fortaleza, that Popcom and the DOH were helping local governments, mandated by law to take on the population management program, to identify their requirements and be contraceptive self-reliant. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

4 pols got 'hot' e-mails from Aquino, Aragoncillo

Front page A1

the FBI for receiving the information allegedly obtained by Aquino, Ricardo Diaz, chief of the Intrepid Division of the National Bureau of Investigation, said Wednesday.

Diaz said the names of the three officials would be divulged once the charges are amended on Sept. 23.

Lacson acknowledged on Tuesday that he had received pieces of information from Aquino but said the documents were of developments in the Philippines that had been reported in the media.

Nonclassified documents

In a statement, Estrada said yesterday he received "unsolicited e-mail messages" from Aragoncillo who, along with other Filipino-Americans working in the White House in the Clinton administration, the former President met during his working visit to the United States in July 2000.

Estrada said Aragoncillo passed on some documents to him while visiting him at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City where he was previously detained.

"As former President and chief he never showed these documents, which were mostly about the current Philippine situation, to Government Secretary Mike Defensor and subalterns Dick Bercrisol.

"Hanu na ang gusto kong talaga kabantay at interrogator na kahit pambalot ng chicken (You know a prisoner will read anything and everything, including the paper used to wrap cooked fish)," Estrada said.

He, however, said he had no knowledge of any illegal activity by Aragoncillo.

The FBI complaint said Aquino was an e-mail to a "high-level" public official in January, to which he said Aragoncillo responded to talk to the official "to give you some updates on the political situation in the country."

The complaint quoted Aquino as saying that "a change in leadership is boiling and that it is just a matter of time."

Exact address

Pimentel said he would not be surprised if he was implicated in the espionage case because he was received a couple of e-mails from Aquino.

In one e-mail, Aquino inquired if Pimentel knew the address of former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, the source said. In another, Aquino complained about the harassment he was being subjected to in the United States.

"I told him, I think I replied, 'I don't know exactly where he (Garcillano) is.' I heard he is in New Jersey ... That was the extent of my conversation with him," Pimentel said Aquino, saying he received the e-mails three, Aquino two or three weeks ago.

Pimentel said he never heard from Aquino again until the news of his arrest on Monday. The senator also said that he received numerous e-mails on his mobile phone, but had yet to open them.

"Now that this thing about Michael Ray Aquino's involvement and alleged violation of US laws have come about, I wouldn't be surprised if they're trying to implicate me there," he said.

Not me

Pimentel earlier tipped off the press to the possibility Garcillano, suspected of conspiring with President Macapagal-Arroyo during last year's presidential elections, had fled to New Jersey.

For his part, Golez, one of the members of the House of Representatives who called for the impeachment of Mr. Arroyo, said he was also on Aquino's mailing list.

But Golez said he did not receive intelligence reports that might have been culled from the FBI's confidential files. He said he had received the first e-mails from Aquino "around June or early June to July and "toward then all clean."

"So, [the second level Philippine official being referred to in the espionage case involving Aquino and Aragoncillo is] not me," Golez said.

Golez, who was appointed national security adviser after Mr. Arroyo came to power in 2001, denied knowing Aragoncillo. He resigned as national security adviser to run for Congress in 2004.

House hearing on Garci tape

Golez said the business that he got a social greeting via e-mail from Aquino when the former President was still in office.

"Before the wiretapped conversation between the President and Garcillano on the alleged rigging of the 2004 elections began three months ago.

He said he was then placed on a "mailing list which included almost of the Philippine Military Academy, particularly former police officers belonging to PMA Class'66.

"Nope, I never got any report from him. I just received a social greeting when he was preparing hearings started in June and reminded me of our exchange at the height of the anti-Estrada rallies in late 2000," Golez said, referring to the personal correspondence between him and Aquino.

Golez said Aquino later included him for a time in his group e-mails regarding his comments on the case involving Mr. Arroyo. "She definitely no reports, no information."

"I now from the Internet article (yesterday) that Aragoncillo was the one sending the e-mails to Aquino and others. I never got e-mails from him (Aragoncillo)," Golez said.

Asked if it was possible that the information he received was similar to those received by Lacson, Golez said: "No, I didn't use Ping's e-mail address in the group e-mail."

Cordial

Estrada said he would not understand why his name was being linked to the case when he had been in detention the last four years since plunder and perjury charges were filed against him in the Sandiganbayan Special Division.

"Bakit nila nito inaasama sa gulong gulo? Wala naman akong alam sa kinasangkutan nya (Why would they include me in this mess? I know nothing about issues involving him)," Estrada said.

"I no longer have any contact with him (Aragoncillo) or Michael Ray Aquino, who is my godson," the former President said.

Earlier, Estrada confirmed he knew Aragoncillo. He described his relationship with Aragoncillo as "cordial."

Estrada said he again met Aragoncillo and other "hailing" when they paid him a courtesy visit at Malacañang some time after his visit to the United States.

A source from the opposition said Aragoncillo and Estrada were introduced to each other by US President Bill Clinton during Estrada's visit to the White House early during his term.

Leandro Aragoncillo

PHOTO of Aragoncillo in the Transcom HYperbook.

GLEANED week June Miguel, JM

Age: 48 years old.

Birthplace: Philippines; came to United States in 1984.

Citizenship: American, naturalized in 1995.

Family: Wife, two children.

Home: Woodbury, New Jersey. While with the US Marine Corps, his address was Jane public, Manila.

Education: BSC in Accounting, College of Commerce, University of Santo Tomas, 1979.

Occupation: FBI intelligence Analyst, Hazel July 2004; suspended Sept. 12, 2005.

Retired US Marine with 21 years service, 1982-2004. Aragoncillo enlisted on Sept. 30, 1982, and was living in Woodbridge, Virginia, Philippines at the time. He did military intensive duty carry for his first nine years of service and was an administration chief for the last 11.

Country Assigned: Stationed in Japan, Guantanamo Bay, Quantico, Virginia. Assignment to the White House between 1999 and 2002 as "administration chief" of the security detail assigned to Vice President Cheney.

Awards: Along with the US Marines, he won numerous commendations, including the Joint Service Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (with Gold Star), and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (with two Gold Stars).

On Sept. 17 last year he was honored as Outstanding Thomasonian in the field of foreign military service by University of Sto. Tomas' College of Commerce during the college's 71st anniversary celebration.

Arrested: Sept. 18, 2005. He has been confined ever since but his former possessions said he and co-accused Michael Ray Aquino were flight risks.

Charges:

- Knowingly communicating classified information by a government employee to an agent or representative of a foreign country (i.e., receiving classified information).
- Acting as an agent of a foreign official without notifying the Attorney General as required by section of Title 18 of the US Code, Section 951.
- Unauthorized use of a government computer in order to obtain and transmit classified information.
- Conspiracy to commit all of the above offenses in violation of Title 18 of the US Code Section 371.

The charges of conspiracy and acting as an unregistered foreign agent carries a sentence of up to 10 years and a $250,000 fine.

Dates of Spying: January 2005 to August 2005.

Possible motivations: $300,000 in debts, mostly mortgages.

Others: His neighbors in the Heritage Woods development, located off County Route 602, Woodbury, New Jersey, were shocked upon learning he had been arrested, saying Aragoncillo was liked and respected. One neighbor said, "I knew he lived like Philippines. He took his son there to see where he grew up."

Sources: US Department of Justice and The Center for Counterintelligence and Security Studies; websites, wire reports, FBI archives

He made 15 trips to RP in 5 years

Front page A1

Aquino for allegedly transmitting classified information to Filipino friends.

He has visited the Philippines on June 12. He left on July 3. It was his first, and so far only visit to the country this year. It was also his longest in five years.

He made one trip in the country's seven other travels from 2 and left six days later. It was his shortest trip.

Aragoncillo made the most trips to the country in 2002, scoring here five times. He first visit that year was on Jan. 9 and he left on Jan. 27. His other trips were from March 12 to 20; July 19 to 31; Sept. 30 to Oct. 12, and Nov. 14 to 24.

He made three trips each to the Philippines in 2003 and 2004.

In 2005, Aragoncillo first flew into the country on Jan. 14 and left on Jan. 18, which was shortly before the return of former President Joseph Estrada. He returned on April 12 and left on the 24th. He also flew in on July 8 and left on the 13th.

In 2004, he was here from March 12 to 23, June 12 to 19, and Sept. 14 to 28.

Aragoncillo visited the Philippines twice in 2003. He first came in Jan. 16 and left on Feb. 1. His new trip was on July 14 and he left on July 30.

In the five years he was flying in and out of the country, he came through the airport of Ninoy Aquino International in Pasay City.

Between January, July and September, he flew in twice in the months of January and June, and only once each in November and April.

BI Executive Director Roy Almoro said the Aragoncillo listed in immigration records and whose birth date was Sept. 22, 1956, had the same reported age, 48, as the arrested FBI analyst. Aragoncillo would then be nearing 49 next week.

His middle name was listed as Agravante.

Aragoncillo also had two recorded addresses in the Philippines, both in Bataan province, Manila. One was on Roman Street and the other on Mapalian Street.

United States of America v. Leandro Aragoncillo and Michael Ray Aquino

NEW PIPELINE IN PLACE. An 18-inch (.2 meter diameter) pipeline was stretched on a platform alongside the historic Lambingan Bridge in Sta. Ana yesterday to bring clean water 24 hours a day to over 10,000 households in one of the oldest enclaves of Manila.
(Story on Page A11)

'Water bridge' now open

By Tina G. Santos

WATER CONCESSIONAIRE Manila Water assured Manila residents of clean and adequate water supply after it inaugurated part of a P550-million water interconnection project yesterday morning.

Jose Lacsamana, corporate communications director of Manila Water, said the project, in partnership with the city government, would benefit over 70,000 households, particularly in the districts of Sta. Ana and San Andres. "It will also solve the water quality problems that have long plagued Chinese cemetery because of old pipes and illegal connections," he said.

The A. Rita Pipe Bridge project involves an 638-meter U.I. meter diameter pipeline built at the cost of P52 million. It connects part of the U.S.Chinese cemetery pipeline with underground conduits now being laid out in San Juan, Mandaluyong, Makati and Manila.

Proposed Plan of Elevated U-Turn Slot

Metro mayors to review MMDA plan for C5 traffic

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METRO MANILA COUNCIL (MMC) will evaluate the traffic management plan of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) for the disputed C5-Kalayaan intersection in Makati City.

"The mayors want the MMDA to present its studies to the MMC regarding its plan for C5-Kalayaan," MMDA Chair Sanyo Bernardo told reporters shortly after the council's morning prayer-ang attention.

The MMC is the agency's policy-making body.

MMDA General Manager Bebot Bautista said the meeting, to be held next week, would "settle once and for all" the C5-Kalayaan issue, from 90,000-100,000 vehicles pass through the intersection every day.

Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad said he agreed with Bautista's proposal to implement.

The MMDA plans to erect traffic at the intersection by constructing elevated U-turn slots.

On the other hand, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) planned to construct underground tunnels.

Bautista and the Makati City council favored the DPWH scheme, which was all set for construction, Bautista has a P5MB-million loan.

But the DPWH still may hold in July that it could not get the necessary "implementation permit" from the MMDA. It "prepared to cancel the implementation in the time remaining is not enough to complete the project" by Sept. 30, when the loan for the project would lapse.

The letter was signed by DPWH Undersecretary Manuel Bonoan and addressed to Makati legislative staff officer Rudel Reyes.

Binay aserted Fernando for not issuing the permit and said he would seek the removal of the 30-PUJ project.

Rida Mewa mayors now willing to listen to the MMDA's plan, he hands hopes the elevated U-turn slots could now be built. He said they would cost only half the price of tunnels.

Under the MMDA scheme, exhibits on Kalayaan Avenue could no longer cross C5, which they do at present.

Instead, traffic from either side of the avenue would be redirected to elevated horseshoe-shaped ramps on opposite sides of C5 Road. But vehicles already on both sides of C5 would be undisturbed.

The DPWH plan, on the other hand, involves the construction of a 400-meter six-lane underpass in C5 Road that would go through the intersection easing traffic overhead via Kalayaan Avenue.

"The elevated U-turn slots would be faster to build since it would take about six months, and would not close down the major artery to traffic," said Fernando.

More policemen sought for Nayong Pilipino

By Jocelyn R. Uy

PASAY CITY IS BEEFING UP SECURITY inside its heritage park, Nayong Pilipino.

Charito Planas, executive secretary of Nayong Pilipino, said patrolling increased police visibility was needed in the area to secure the premises of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

"I am really worried about the security of the airport," said Planas in a phone interview with the Inquirer.

Not qualified

She explained that though the park had its own security guards to look after the welfare of its visitors, the guards were "not qualified" to secure the area bordering the airport.

Borders

Nayong Pilipino, located along Nair Road, is close to both Nair-1 and Nair-3.

Nair-2 is separated from the park by the Philippine Village Hotel, but only a steel fence divides Nair-3 and the park.

Security measures

In a previous interview, Supt. Elpidio Lopez, deputy chief for operations of the Pasay City police, said the airport could be vulnerable to terrorist attacks through the park.

Planas had sought the assistance of the aviation security, the Manila International Airport Authority and the Pasay police led by its chief, Senior Supt. Rolando Penaso, to strengthen security measures in the park as well as the boundaries of the airport.

Sub station

Meanwhile, Planas said she has also yesterday that a sub-station would be installed inside the park.

It would be a reinforcement of Pasay's Police Community Precinct 9.

Bike patrol

A bike patrol unit would complement the sub-station, he said, adding there would be six policemen in the area initially.

Police visibility

The increased police visibility was also aimed at attracting local and foreign tourists to the park, he said.

"There are a lot of tourists visiting the place. In fact, there are travelers who stay in the park while waiting for their flights," Planas said.

Reinforcements

Planas hoped to have the reinforced police unit first week of October.

But she said it would depend on when the Metropolitan of Agreement among the different agencies involved would be finalized.

MOA awaited

"We are still in the process of finalizing the Memorandum of Agreement," Planas said.

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Chinese group hits 'smear drive'

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SHINING TIBER FLIGHT TO the Philippines, practitioners of a Chinese spiritual group yesterday filed their charges against Chinese-Embassy officials and four local Chinese newspapers based in Manila.

In a complaint filed in the Ombudsman City Prosecutors' Office yesterday, the group said the respondents had joined a worldwide smear campaign against their group Falun Gong.

Falun Gong is a movement a decade old spiritual group which began in China "devoted to the cultivation of the body, moral and spirit." The complainants said. The group had introduced the practice in the country five years ago to about 3,000 Filipinos, according to John Lantua, a practitioner.

Included in the complaint were Chinese Ambassador Lu Shaye Jr., Deputy Chief of Mission Xiao Qian, the Chinese Commercial News, the Philippine News, the United Daily News and the Sino-Fil Daily.

The group alleged that the four local newspapers published press releases from the embassy calling the group an "evil cult," and a "public enemy" among other things. In some issues reversal calls to the Chinese Embassy for comment, but it could not be reached.

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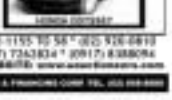

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METRO

Traffic stops for men in blue, brown

By Tarra F. Quismundo

DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOU SEE MEN IN brown and blue uniforms at the intersection of Taft Avenue and Edsa in Pasay City.

Men in blue and brown are now busy managing the busy intersection, as officers of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Traffic Enforcement Group (MMDA TEG) began sharing the job of managing traffic in the area with Pasay City's local traffic enforcers fondly called "Chocolate Boys."

"We have an already there, apprehending violators and ensuring obstructions on the road. Even if the Chocolate Boys are still there, we don't bother them. We just let them stay there," said Lt. Supt. Philmore Balmaceda, MMDA TEG group chief.

Complaints

This week, MMDA Chief Bayani Fernando ordered the TEG to take over the intersection after the agency was swamped with complaints of traffic breakdown in the crowded area.

Traffic enforcers from the city government had long been manning the crossing.

Enlisted by Pasay City's opposition to the MMDA decision, Balmaceda said yesterday that the agency had all the right to make the intersection's traffic as its business, as Edsa was a major thoroughfare.

"Look at Quezon City, Mandaluyong, and Makati. They may have their own traffic enforcers, but they stay away from Edsa," Fernando told reporters yesterday.

"It's only the MMDA that can dispatches traffic enforcers, not the other way around," the MMDA chief added.

Angelito Vergel de Dios, Executive Director of the MMDA Traffic Operations Center, said the agency's move was only meant to respond to public clamor for the MMDA to act on the traffic mess at Taft-Edsa.

The leading concern, he said, was the use of the intersection as a virtual terminal for jeepneys waiting for passengers.

METROBRIEFS

Honest cop a skilled sleuth

PO1 JAIME Agatombo Cisneros Jr. of the North Police District (NPD) Mobile Force homicide unit is not only an honest cop but also a meticulous investigator. Navotas mayor-elect Tobias Reynaldo M. Tiangco (PFI) in cash, automatic teller machine (ATM) and credit cards and a spare GSM subscriber identity module card. With local clues and contact numbers to start his search, the policeman was able to find the owner by sending text messages to several persons included in the GSM card. Turia said Cisneros' act reflected the kind of leadership of the NPD. Earlier, two Navotas policemen, also from the NPD, were cited for returning more than a million pesos in cash and checks to a robbery. Cisneros could not be accommodated for his honesty, police authorities said. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

Tips paid off

A TIPSTER who helped uncover a slew of illegal drug operations in San Jose City condominiums was lauded by the city government early this week. Restituto Victoria of the Nationwide Security Allied Services Agency was awarded a certificate of commendation for tipping concerned agencies about the activities of drug traders operating in condominiums in the city. This led to a series of raids at Landscape Plaza on Tomas Morato, City Investa Condominium on Aurora Boulevard, and PSE Condominium on West Avenue. The anti-drug operations led to the confiscation of amphetamine and dextromoramide, both illegal substances. The Quezon City Anti-Drug Abuse Advisory Council also commended Lt. Quezon City policemen, including nine violation enforcers, for operation to curb illegal drug operations in the city. *Ella Dy*

Sign language seminar

THE PHILTECH-NEAP Interpreters Association, Inc. through its social partner, the School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies of De La Salle College of Saint Benilde, will hold a series of seminars on Filipino Sign Language from Sept. 19-21 at the DLS-CSB campus on Taft Avenue, Manila. For details, call 526-1461 to 65, local 500 or 524.

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OFW remittances surged 25.7% in July

THE CONTINUING rise in the demand for Filipino workers abroad reflects the comparative advantage of OFWs in a series of skills.

First 7-month total rises 22% to $4.7B

By Doris C. Dumlao

DOLLARS SENT HOME by overseas Filipinos surged by 25.7 percent in July to $885 million from $703.91 million a year ago as more skilled workers sought greener pastures abroad.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday that this brought the January to July remittances from migrant workers to $5.4 billion, or 22.1 percent better than the $4.7 billion level a year ago.

"The continued rise in remittances resulted from the increase in the number of deployed Filipino workers and the sustained efforts by commercial banks to provide banking assistance to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs)," BSP Officer-in-Charge Jose Cuisia Jr. said.

The major sources of remittances were the United States, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

Citing preliminary data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Cuisia Jr. said that for the first seven months of the year, the total number of Filipino workers deployed abroad rose by 5.3 percent to 509,130.

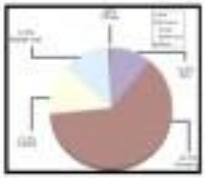
Land-based workers increased by 2.9 percent to 413,398 while sea-based workers likewise rose by 9.4 percent to 145,798.

"The continuing demand for Filipino workers abroad also reflects the comparative advantage of OFWs in terms of skills," Cuisia said.

"This can be ascribed in part to the government's training assistance to OFWs aimed at further enhancing human resource development as well as reinforcing employability and competence—such as computer literacy, seafarers' training and education with new maritime equipment and training facilities," he explained.

Meanwhile, he said commercial banks remained aggressive in their campaign to provide assistance to the growing number of Filipino workers abroad through the introduction of enhanced modes of remittance transfers, establishment of more remittance centers and strengthening of arrangements with foreign financial institutions and collection agents to facilitate OFW transfers.

In Saudi Arabia, Cuisia said it helped that the country's monetary authority recently allowed banks to open branches in the Kingdom.



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PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

Shares close 0.61% lower

MANY prices closed 0.61 percent lower yesterday, ending a two-day rally after further losses on Wall Street and a fresh spike in oil prices hit sentiment, dealers said.

They said the return to higher oil prices after the latest US oil stockpiles data estimations gave the possible impact on inflation and the rate the central bank could take interest rates as a result.

The composite index fell 11.65 points to 1,903.59, off a high of 1,915.83. Turnover was 8.12 million shares worth P822.1 million.

The broader all-shares index retreated 5.79 points to 1,166.24.

Losers beat gainers 55 to 11, with 49 stocks unchanged.

"This is a correction after the technical rebound," said Jose Teodoro of GK Capital Securities.

He said the market failed to sustain the gains of the past two days in the absence of fresh positive news and after oil prices resumed their uptrend, prompting fresh concerns about the impact on the economy.

"Also we see good reasons why the market should rise and if it gives us 1% reasons why it shouldn't," Victoria said.

Dealers sent an expected tightening to monetary policy also dampened sentiment.

"Investors have turned short-term, given lingering concerns on oil. Politics also remains a destabilizer to trade," said Ron Bridge of Nomura Capital Equities, referring to efforts to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was the most active stock, falling P30 to P1,240.

SM Prime Holdings declined 1.5 centavos to P7.10, while parent SM Investments was unchanged at P513.

Meralco A, available to all investors, was down 1 peso to P259.50. Meralco A, limited to Filipinos, was unchanged at P13.74.

Ayala Corp. eased P2.50 to P286 while Ayala Land was flat at P7.20.

San Miguel B, open to all investors, was unchanged at P90, as was San Miguel A, limited to Filipinos, at P85.50. —JEFF

Platinum bucks SEC move

EMMETT D. PLATINUM Platinum Phils. Inc. is continuing the authenticity of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to declare it insolvent and unfit to run...pensive shareholders.

In a document filed yesterday with the stock exchange, Platinum said SEC's findings are its supposed financial condition were "unreliable and manifestos" and "unexplainably without basis."

SEC had said that based on its financial examinations, Platinum's total assets were only P2.95 billion, summary, posted in liabilities of P5.26 billion, making it insolvent.

Platinum, however, said in its voluntary manifestation that SEC admitted during hearings at the Makati RTC last Aug. 24 and 31 that its valuation "barely validated" an earlier inspection of its pieces of property and "arbitrarily arrived" at a capital deficiency of P200-Million.

Platinum, thus, asked the trial court to consider its petition for rehabilitation and suspension of its liquidation plan.

SEC has yet to file its opposition to Platinum's rehabilitation scheme. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Pre-need plan sales dropped 69% in July

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRE-NEED PLAN SALES PLUNGED 69 percent to P1.27 billion in July from P4.08 billion in the same month last year as the industry continued to reel from the financial woes plaguing major pre-need companies.

From January and July this year, sales dropped 43.5 percent to P16.34 billion from P16.45 billion in the same period last year.

Sales of education plans, on the other hand, dropped 56.4 percent to P3.98 billion, while sales of pension plans declined by 46.9 percent to P6.4 billion from P12.71 billion in the same period last year.

For July, education plans led the slump in sales, with a 76.1-percent drop to P311.3 million from P1.31 billion in the same month last year.

Sales of pension plans also sank 68.8 percent to P777.8 million in July from P2.46 billion in the same period last year.

In July, the SEC said the same list of plans sold down 92.1 percent to 17,813 from 68,473 in the same month last year.

Education plans numbered 78 percent, followed by pension plans which did 13.3 percent and life plans which dropped 40.6 percent for the month.

Investors have shied away from pre-need plans due to the financial troubles besetting the big players.

To list, three major pre-need firms have sought court protection from creditors and plan holders due to their inability to settle liabilities.

Leading the list is College Assurance Plan Phils. Inc. with over 700,000 plan holders, followed by Pacific Plans Inc. with 34,000 and Platinum Plans Phils. Inc. with 57,000.

In education plans, Berkeley International Plans dominated sales in July with P148.9 million, followed by Philam Plans at P65.8 million and Prudencialife Plans at P30.3 million.

For life plans, Philam Plans was the top seller with P56.9 million, trailed by Ft. Point Life Plans with P41.7 million and Prudencialife Plans at P25.4 million.

For pension plans, the top three companies registered sales for the month of July were Prudencialife Plans (P217.3 million), Philam Plans (P175.9 million) and Manulife Financial Plans (P127.5 million).

SEC commissioner Mercedes Jose-Aviado also on Wednesday after the SEC filed criminal charges for illegal sale of pre-need plans.

PPI gets its day in court

TROUBLED PRUDENTIAL PHILIPPINE Pacific Plans Inc. will have its day in court—for the second time.

Branch 61 of the Makati Regional Trial Court on Sept. 8 ordered PPI's petition where the pre-need firm argued that it could not use this to bail funds of its liability plans to pay claims of its old spot-traded plans.

The supplemental petition PPI submitted on Aug. 8 came after the pre-need firm filed for rehabilitation.

The court set another hearing on Oct. 5.

Even as PPI officials turbocharged the move, they said that it would still be impossible for them to settle the debts of the firm when their bill due.

They said the trust funds of various products that their value characters, memories and pension plans...could only be used to service their respective plan holders. They said they could not use the funds to pay benefits due to operated educational plaintholders.

Besides, the Insurance and Exchange Commission stripped Lifetime Plans—a former PPI subsidiary that sells fixed value education plans—of its excellence of incorporation for the commitment that affirms a company to exist.

In subsequent orders between June and July, the Makati court also ordered the consolidation of the assets and liabilities of Lifetime with PPI, paving the way for Lifetime to be folded back into its parent company.

PPI's spokesperson, Maria Asuncion C. Tecson, in a statement said that Lifetime plan holders should not worry since they would continue to be paid.

Tecson said that the trust funds corresponding to their fixed value plans are intact and can restore the their benefits.

The official also said PPI is legally constrained to pay tuition claims this coming semester. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Cebu Pacific seeks $4 hike in fare

CEBU AIR Pacific, the country's second largest carrier, has ordered the Civil Aeronautics Board for an additional $4 fuel surcharge on one-way overseas trips.

The said Boeing the Galaxy-operated carrier's fuel surcharge to $15 from $11.

Cebu Pacific also asked the Cabinet to charge a fee of 18 US cents to kilogram of cargo to cover the increasing costs of jet fuel. Cebu the is the first carrier to ask for a fuel surcharge on cargo carried on overseas flights.

Cebu Pacific then will the Asia has has plans of expanding to the United States in two years.

Starting October, it would fly to Honolulu, Japan.

Philippine Airlines, on the other hand, has a pending petition to increase its fuel surcharge on one-way long-haul trips to $40 from $37. Clarissa E. dantes

RP business risks rising, says ADB

THE RISKS TO DOING BUSINESS in the Philippines are rising, leading to a sharp drop in foreign direct investment (FDI) to the Southeast Asian country in recent years, according to an Asian Development Bank study.

Rising fiscal deficits, the increasing influence of vested interests in the courts and in lawmaking, and the government's tendency "to override market forces in prospective investors, said the report, obtained by AFP Thursday.

"While private enterprises dominate the economy, effective competition does not exist in many sectors," it added.

The Manila-based ADB said private investment flows to the Philippines slowed after the 1997 Asian crisis "and have yet to recover."

Gross domestic investment fell to 16.1 percent of gross national product (GNP) in 2002 from 23.6 percent of GNP in 1996.

FDI flows, meanwhile, plunged to $180 million in 2003 from a high of $1.3 billion in 1999.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's government reported earlier this week that FDI flows had jumped 15.7 percent from a year earlier to $495 million in the first six months to June but the total was a pittance compared to investors going to many of Manila's developing Asian neighbors.

"For foreign investors, the perceived risks of doing business in the Philippines are rising, encouraging them to seek alternative investment destinations" such as China, South Korea and Thailand, the ADB report said.

AFP

Mirant appoints new head for RP unit

By Abigail L. Ho

ATLANTA-BASED MIRANT CORP. has appointed Mirant Caribbean Inc. president James Hanks to lead its Philippine operations by Dec. 1, replacing Augusto Salcedo Jr.

Hanks's duties will remain in the company as vice chair of Mirant Philippines.

Hanks also retains his chief executive position until Jan. 1, 2006.

As president of Mirant Caribbean, Hanks was in charge of developing new business in the Caribbean region.

He was also in-charge of the operations of two vertically integrated utilities, Compañía Pedro Investor Co. (EPC) and Grand Bahama Power Co., as well of independent power producer PowerGen in Trinidad and Tobago and Curacao Utilities Operating Co. in Curacao.

He sits as chair of the board at AES, transportation commission chair at PowerGen, and member of the boards of Power-Gen, Grand Bahama and the Atlantic Foundation of the University of the West Indies.

He also heads Curacao Integrated water and electricity firm Aqualectra.

Mirantis, on the other hand, has contributed to the growth of Mirant's Philippine operations.

From having a total installed capacity of only 835 megawatts (MW) in 2000, Mirant Philippines is now the country's biggest IPP with 2,200 MW.

HANKS

ISM wants total control of ETPI

By Carissa S. Bautista

ISM COMMUNICATIONS CORP. plans to acquire more shares of Eastern Telecommunications Phils. Inc. after it completes its buyout of a 40-percent block from an Australian firm.

The company, controlled by businessman Roberto F. Ongpin, had asked the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Philippine Stock Exchange to approve a P500-million stock rights offering to bankroll the acquisition.

"The proceeds of the rights offer will be used to possibly purchase more shares of stock of ETPI to support operations of ETPI or such other purposes the company may deem necessary," it said ISM to its disclosure to the PSE.

ISM expects to offer the stock rights by the end of the year.

ISM already owns 17.5 percent of ETPI through a shareswap agreement with between Investors and Managers Inc., a company owned by the Yuchengco family.

Ayeseeth now owns 6.8 percent of ISM.

Then ISM is also finalizing an $8.2-million infusion from a group led by Infocore Investment Management Inc. and Global Kingdom together with Asian Resources Corp. of Emperio Acuzar III and Berthier Ong Jr. of Dragon and ISM president Eric Recto.

The $8.2 million is enough to finance ISM's purchase of Australian Gigabyte Network Interactional Ltd.'s 40 percent stake in Eastern Telecoms.

Aside from Ayeseeth's 17.7 percent and Australian Gigabyte's 40 percent, Ongpin and his group would take buy the government's 35.2 percent class stake in ETPI should it consider selling.

The block, the stock of a subsidiary Investors Master associate Asberto Benedicto and the government, is held by the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

This is separate from the 22.5 percent stake sequestered by the PCGG from Marcos associates Manuel Nieto and Thomas SEVEA.

"We are interested in these shares to get 67.5 percent, which is deemed controlled. We could use part of the proceeds of the rights offering to buy the government stake," said Ongpin in an earlier interview.

ISM told the SEC and the PSE that the majority shareholders have allowed the company to issue into a private transaction to raise $8.2 million before conducting a rights offer.

The PSE requires companies to prioritize existing shareholders in any right offer before taking it new investors.

In ISM's case, two of the companies that bought new shares through a private placement were controlled by existing majority owners.

OFW remittances . . .

country had granted a license to one bank in lieu of the closed money exchange companies—a move meant to address money laundering problems. This contributed to the increase in remittances as transactions were carried through the banking channels, he said.

The level of remittances for the month of July alone, however, was lower than the all-time high of P97.08 billion for the month of June.

The Philippines has been relying on huge remittances from OFWs to boost domestic consumer demand. In 2004, OFW remittances carried through the banking system jumped 18.5 billion over the year.

Solution in the side of the country's economy the amount of OFW inflows was low equivalent to about 10.3 percent of gross domestic product. Also, it now accounts for about 20 percent of the value of the country's export of goods and services and about 1.3 times the value of the domestic exports.

The BSP is trying to encourage OFWs to course their remittances through the formal banking channels.

Some local bankers estimate that remittances going through the informal channels could be double that being sent sent by the banks, although the BSP itself, for purposes of computing the country's external accounts, assumes that informal remittances usually only be 20 percent higher if informal transactions were included.

Informal channels refer to unlicensed or unregulated operations such as hawala, padala or other channels.

The Philippines is recognized as a global pioneer in innovative ways to capture migrant remittances which are, in turn, recognized as a powerful yet underutilized tool of poverty

Revolt of the Haciendaros II

FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON, Malacañang Palace's political astute, but at least arm's-length hand it to their board members for having the courage to put their heads on the block by discussing who among them signed the resignation manifesto. (See Cocktales, Sept. 14, 2005, for background.)

Unlike the MBC's, a similar statement raised almost simultaneously by the Management Association of the Philippines bore absolutely no signatures.

Here's what apparently happened.

According to MBC, the disk retrieved rollingpaper from the MAP to unveil the emergency meeting that immediately July 11 meeting to discuss the resignations of the so-called Hyatt 10.

The MAP contingent that trolled in the Peninsula Manila included Manuel Bonoan, Peter Wallace, Evelyn Singson, Jaime Ledda, Cynthia Marcos, Francisco Sildanoch, Bernie Cordero and Arnold Salvador.

The hotel resigned accountants Anna Ramos and Cesar Pantoja were there to give the haciendaros and their Makati cut brigade a blow-by-blow account of their dissatisfaction with the Malacañang summit.

Melito Salazar Jr., president of the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, also joined in, as did the lone representative from Phinma Corp. A recently retired Rizalistic Board member, Salazar later resigned the MBC statement, along with MBC chair Ricardo Pascual.

According to the grapevine, FLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan was unable to attend the Pen meeting as he was still winging his way to Manila from his Hong Kong office.

Economist Bernardo Villegas, who offered during the Cory years to cut off an arm (or was it his head?) if his prediction were proven wrong, was also there moreover, our town screamers ring the gentle ribbing of the Benigno Cory, dean Ferdinand Martin Bernardito, who he was a no-show at the MBC meeting and, more important, refused to sign the anti-GMA statement.

"After deliberation, Dean among those present, a position paper asking for the President's resignation was read and commented upon," the MBC minutes of the meeting said.

Bernardo Jr. (referring to MBC, MAP, Finex) was provided copies of the draft statement and all agreed that each board would "consult separately to arrive at its own decision."

The president of the Social Security System, Corazon dela Paz, had to leave for another meeting in Quezon City and did not see the final version of the MBC statement, although she later indicated her approval by affixing her signature.

It is not clear, given her resignation letter, how Dela Paz's letters of the SSS would be affected. She was said to be in Europe at the time of this writing.

(A note on spelling: There is no "haciendero" to be found in Spanish dictionaries. The closest, "hacendero", means "thrifty" or "industrious", and would be an stretch of imagination mean "hacienda (ranch) owner" in the Spanish-Filipino sense of the term.)

$170 to West Coast

NORTHWEST Airlines is again offering its ramshaking cash-and-miles promo for budget-happy flyers.

Round-trip, economy class fare to major West Coast cities, as well as Honolulu and Las Vegas, goes for $170 plus 40,000 frequent flyer miles; same-class passage to East Coast destinations, in the other hand, goes for $276, plus miles-takings.

Taxes and fuppies are over more affordable, at $120 and 10,000 miles.

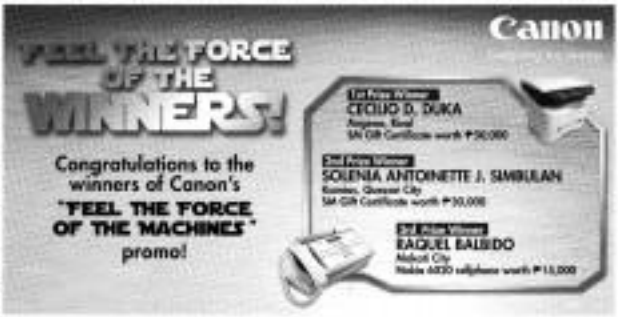
Those who book through the NorthwestAirlines.com website off an additional $20 for every leg.

Fine print: Departure from Manila is allowed only up to Dec. 15. Return is valid up to 16 days.

CONTINUED ON 10

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin



Nordic states eye energy projects in RP

By Abigail L. Ho

NORDIC COUNTRIES SWEDEN, FINLAND, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark are scouting for investment and business opportunities in the country, particularly in the area of new and renewable energy.

In a briefing yesterday, Swedish envoy Annika Mansson and President Macapagal-Arroyo's emphasis on the development of renewable energy resources, in light of the global oil price crisis. And another concern among Nordic companies to look at business opportunities here.

"There's great interest among Nordic firms to also share the technologies and solutions that we can provide," she said.

Norway's SN Power, and Royal Norwegian Ambassador Svale Rino, were also looking at the Philippines as one of the emerging countries that it could tap.

SN Power is involved in hydroelectric power development in emerging markets.

"SN Power's interest in the Philippines is in the river that there's really interest in the market," he said.

Dutch companies have also started to see the sense in getting into the Philippine market, particularly as they had a lot of experience in developing renewable energy resources. Royal Netherlands Embassy deputy chief of mission Ric Hennings said.

"Many companies now see the commercial possibility of coming in the Philippines. High oil prices do help (push the development of) renewable energy especially in the country or not," he said.

Dutch firms Sollard Energy BV and TSolAR (The Solar Solutions for Rural) are working with local companies Atenio Power Solutions Inc., Def. tor International and Assessment Inc. for the development of panelled solar energy solutions that are well suited to the Philippine market.

Through a Netherlands government-supported feasibility study, Hennings said the companies were "confining the conditions under which solar energy can be used on a larger scale in the Philippines."

Another Dutch company, Emergen Wind Technologies BV, was also keen on finding business partners in the country to market wind energy solutions, he said.

Shell Solar Philippines Inc., one of the companies under the Royal Dutch Shell Group, is also currently implementing a solar home system project with Philippine National Oil Co., which entails the installation of 15,300 solar home systems in off-grid locations.

The project is being financed in part by a 40-percent grant from the Netherlands' DGIS.

For her part, Finnish envoy Riitta Resch said companies in her country were willing to come back to "see and decide for themselves the opportunities in this market."

She added that Nordic firms were also willing to introduce technologies and solutions that would help the country develop its energy resources.

"We would tell the Philippines how to address its local markets. (Nordic companies) will just be presenting solutions that have been proven to work from countries," she said.

Implementation of early harvest program pushed

Tariff cuts on products traded with China

By Reuvel W. Domingo

MALACAÑANG IS MOVING TO accelerate the implementation of tariff reductions on goods traded with China under which part be moves the mainland and the inclusion of Southeast Asian bloc following a favorable opinion from the justice Department.

Romulo Neri the Cabinet-level Committee on Tariff and Customs Matters said the Department of Justice issued an opinion dated Aug. 9 saying that the Asean-Chi... to Early Harvest Program was an executive agreement rather than ... ratification part.

This means the agreement does not need ratification from the Senate before its provisions could be implemented.

Romulo said the Department of Foreign Affairs, which is leading the country's efforts to have the pact implemented, was of the same position that the EHP could push through without the ... Congress.

The CTRM has recommended that an executive order be issued on the implementation of the EHP which Manila and Beijing ... to start next year.

Last April, the Philippines agreed to enter Early Harvest Program with China through a framework agreement on an Asean-China Comprehensive Economic Cooperation.

The CEC paves the way for the realization of an Asean-China Free Trade Area by 2010.

The EHP gives Asean members an advance low-tariff entry before the free trade agreement takes effect on condition that Asean markets be open to Chinese products.

To be implemented starting Jan. 1, the Philippine-China EHP covers 200 tariff lines that include plant, animal and ... products.

In particular, the EHP lists the following specific products: refined but not chemically-modified sugars, palm kernel or babassu oil; crude oil and refined oil produced from coconut, palm kernel or babassu oil, whether or not with added sugar or other sweetening matter; and water, ... bamboo or similar materials.

The Philippines is the last of the 10 Asean members to enter China's EHP. The others have done so as early as 2003 and have cut tariffs on covered products to between 2 percent and 15 percent and agreed to remove such tariffs in 2006.

Bank lending up 4% to P1.55T in July

LENDING BY COMMERCIAL banks picked up by 4 percent as of end-July to P1.55 trillion from ... ago level due to higher demand from financial institutions, real estate and business services sector.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Officer-in-Charge Diwa Guinigundo noted that the annual growth in July however, was slower than the 6.4 percent ... posted in both lending to ...

"The BSP's strong commitment to help banks offload their non-performing assets and clean up their balance sheets, along with the banking industry's sustained efforts to improve overall asset quality, are expected to further boost bank lending," Guinigundo said.

"This would, in turn, provide economic growth in non-metropolitan banks channel credit to productive activities," he said.

Loans to commodity, social and personal services and manufacturing activities also contributed about 1.4 and 1.3 percentage points, respectively, to the annual growth in July. Rovin C. Jhordan

ORTIGAS TRADITION

Going the extra mile for the handicapped

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

SEEING GREAT STORES MADE IN IN-ngosing Ones into the mainstream society people used to disabled like have are ca bilty ex-cyc the architects consequences that "normal" people who make for granted.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

Take shopping ... going to the movies. Most of the shopping centers and movie houses in Metro Manila, especially in the provinces, do not have special ramps, ... ramps or elevators to allow people on wheelchairs to shop or watch a movie on their own.

But the Greenhills Shopping Center is ... Juan.

But Dalton B. chief operating officer of Greenhills Shopping Center's owner Ortigas and Co., told the business in an interview that helping people with disabilities into a tradition in the Ortigas family and was being expressed in the special ramps installed all over the popular shopping center.

Dalton said the Greenhills Theater, likewise, has a ramp for the disabled and they have their own bathrooms.

People on wheelchairs can move around the malls shopping services by hitching their wheelchairs on staircases that will bring them up to the next floor.

Forgotten sector

"We have always been committed to the disabled because we believe that it is a forgotten sector," Dalton said. "That's why we try to be the most friendly shopping center for persons with disabilities."

Come the busy Christmas season, when shopping at the Greenhills Shopping Center becomes frenzied and hectic, Ortigas and Co. reserves premium ramp space for these people.

The company provides approximately P60,000 worth of free mall a year to the National Council for the Welfare of the Disabled Persons.

"Through this, we encourage people with disabilities, such as the deaf, ... and people ... wheelchairs, to become ... businessmen," Dalton said.

Also, all the hospitality beneficiaries of the project in Tabacang Nalang Tagaytay, which sells ... products painstakingly done by hand by the disabled Filipinos under it wings.

Other beneficiaries are the Philippine Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Ins...

ENDURANCE/Wilfredo Rogelio is one of the major beneficiaries of the Ortigas program. ... PHILIPPINE STAR

Philippine Tuberculosis Society and the Training the Trainers for the Disabled program.

These organizations get to take booths all of them rent-free. Ortigas and Co. gives them the storage space for free.

Helping the disabled become economically independent is just one of the causes that the Ortigas group is espousing through the Ortigas Foundation.

History, culture

Another major endeavor concerns history culture and the arts.

Ortigas and Co. maintains one of the biggest collections of Philippiniana items, photographs, paintings, videos and documents that relate to all aspects of the history and development of the Philippines as a nation.

The 600-SQ-square meter library at the Ortigas main office has 9,227 books, of which 1,917 are classified as rare. The oldest book is a Spanish book published in 1646.

The library also houses government documents, such as the annual reports of the Philippine Commission, and periodicals such as the Bulletin of the American Historical Collection.

The company has likewise started a fund to publish a book that will showcase Philippine history from a Filipino perspective, and has started to set the documentation of Philippine churches. The last ties will with another project to construct 20 10-foot shrines from Edsa Shrine to Antipolo to guide pilgrims trekking to pay homage to the Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Antipolo, Rizal.

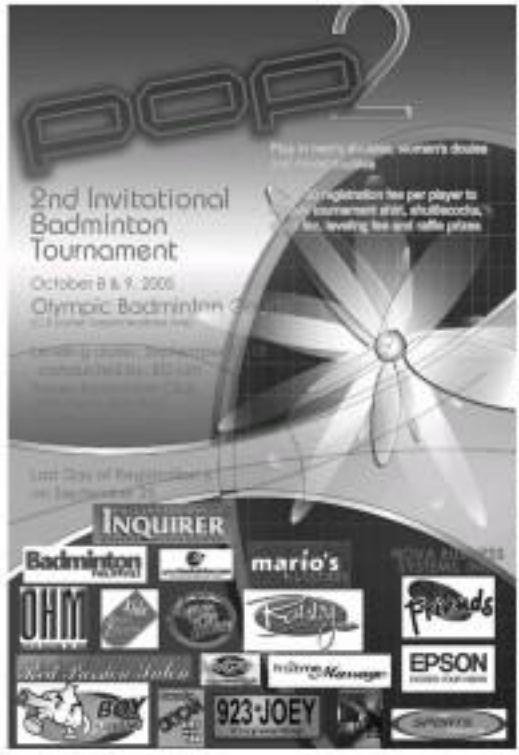
Triple bottom line

Ortigas and Co. has already completed the construction of a Catholic chapel and a Muslim prayer room, the first of its kind in the city, in gratitude to the Muslim leaders who made the shopping center their home.

"We believe that we have a responsibility to our shareholders, and that includes shareholders, employees, management, customers and community," Dalton said.

He added that the company was part of an increasing group of local companies that believed in the triple bottom line.

That means the company must not only be concerned with its profit and loss statement, but also to social and economic impact.



Ayala taps peso loans worth P4B to pay dollar obligations

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA CORP. SAID IT WAS SECURING P4.2 billion in loans from a consortium of four local banks to prepay maturing dollar notes ...

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Ayala Corp. said it had recently signed the loan agreements with ING Capital Corp., First Metro Investment Corp., Bankers Investment and Trust Corp. and China Banking Corp.

The loan will be used to prepay the company's dollar-denominated debts, which are falling due in 2006, in line with its debt self-sustaining program.

Ayala has $89 million in debts maturing this year and $132 million falling due next year.

Renato Montiel, managing director at Ayala, said the new loan would ensure in some years and would have a fixed interest rate of 10.375 percent a year.

Ayala will have the option to redeem or buy back the loan beginning the fourth year anniversary of the issue.

The new borrowings will increase the share of its peso debt in its total borrowings to 60 percent peso debt from 42 percent, while dollar denominated debt will go down to 40 percent from 58 percent.

Ramon Opulencia, Ayala treasurer, said the company had about P300 million in addition to the requirements of maturing loans up to next year.

Gov't trains guns on self-employed

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE IS LOOKing at collecting presumptive taxes from self-employed individuals and professionals not paying their right taxes.

Under the concept of presumptive taxation, the government would set a minimum income that a taxpayer can declare. This will be the basis for the computation of tax liabilities.

The presumed minimum income would depend on the average income in the industry where the taxpayer belongs.

According to Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, self-employed individuals are not forced to pay proper taxes because they have the assurance of declaring their own income instead of having an employer withhold their taxes.

Compared to salaried individuals, the DOF said self-employed individuals, like doctors and lawyers, enjoy significantly less taxes.

In 2004, salaried individuals paid income tax equivalent to 10.25 percent of their income, while self-employed and professionals paid an equivalent of only 1.25 percent of their income.

"Presumptive taxation could be the best way to address this problem," Teves said.

Teves, who assumed the top finance post last July, said the adoption of the presumptive taxation method of collecting revenues was also being pushed by congressmen in the House of Representatives, the DOF's attached agency.

Cocktales

From page B2

energy between Dec. 8 and 12, when the Ilibayan fill up every available air line seat for the annual Takotak homecoming.

Tours are limited. And Northwest has just filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

Money-go-round

• THE OUTGOING president of BBDO Guerrero Ortega ad agency Susan Dimaculi, will not be joining ASA-GSS when she leaves the advertising firm after 20-ve years. She has no dreams. Considerable chemistry with the boutique creative shop, David Guerrero.

An ING-DIR source said talks with Dr... many) were past the exploratory stage.

• FORMER GMA chief of staff, current vice-chairman Fidel-ito Villanueva, has been appointed board member of Clark Development Corp., vice Bienvenido Lim.

• CONTRARY to Manila Polo Club speculations, club president Ben Bumpus said the present board is not considering any audit of the past administration's expenditures and contracts.

Heard through the grapevine

THOMA Alfonso Yuchengco Jr. is seeking a minority partner for his Yuchengco Commercial Banking Corp.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@philstar.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

AN AERIAL view of Clark economic zone

Gov't condones back taxes of ecozone firms

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT AGREED TO condone the back taxes incurred by tenants in special economic zones under the Bases Conversion Development Act when the Supreme Court revoked the tax perks early this year.

Affected by the SC ruling were the Clark Development Corp., which administers the Clark economic zone in Angeles, Pampanga, and John Hay Management Corp., which runs the John Hay economic zone in Baguio City. Both were created under the BCDA charter or Republic Act 7227.

Poro Point Development Corp., also included by the Department of Finance in its position paper because it was also under the BC-Dfo jurisdiction.

In a letter to the chair of the Senate committee on government and public interest, Sen. Richard Gordon, dated Sept. 14, the Department of Finance said the government could waive the liabilities incurred by those locators due to the ruling, but only from the time they set up shops in these economic zones until the effectivity of the Supreme Court's order.

The Supreme Court ruled that there was no basis in the granting of tax incentives to the locators in these economic zones. These located in Clark but the privileges starting July 20 and in John Hay last March 29.

The DOF said it would no longer collect the taxes retroactively to position paper was drafted in consultation with the BCDA.

In lieu of all national and local taxes, the locators in these economic zones were paying a preferential tax rate of 5 percent on gross income.

The tax liabilities incurred from reduced to the different locators the 5 percent gross income tax and the regular national and local taxes.

However, the DOF said the waiver should not cover the tax duties on articles, raw materials, capital goods, equipment and consumer items removed from the special economic zones and brought into customs territory.

GOINGS-ON

AUB cash card

Tax conference

NGO bags award

DOE OKs oil exploration deal with Kuwait, Japan firms

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY has approved a farm-in agreement between Japan Petroleum Exploration Co. Ltd. (Japex) and Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Co. for oil and gas exploration work on Tawas Block in Central Visayas.

Early this year, Japex acquired Service Contract 46 from the DOE and, with it, the right to explore for oil and gas resources in the area.

With the current agreement, Kuwait Petroleum will acquire 30 percent stake in the block, while Japex holds on to the remaining 70 percent.

In a statement yesterday, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said that the entry of Kuwait Petroleum in the local exploration scene is a welcome development since the country is stepping up efforts to harness its indigenous energy resources.

Kuwait Petroleum is involved in the exploration and development of small oil and gas reserves in foreign countries. Its entry into the Philippine exploration market is part of its worldwide operational expansion. It currently has operations in South Africa, Indonesia and Tunisia.

According to the company's website, it aims to increase production capacity to 300,000 barrels per day of oil equivalent by 2010 from its present production capacity of around 91,000 barrels per day.

In early May, Kuwait Petroleum announced its initial surveys of the exploration area. Data processing and evaluation are now being conducted to determine the project's viability and potential yield.

If oil and gas reserves in the area are proven to be of commercial value after the seven-year exploration period, Japex and Kuwait Petroleum will be given another 25 years for production.

Japex has extensive international experience in oil and gas exploration. The company is the 30% shareholder and operator of the Sabiri field in Oman, 68% held in North Sumatra and Ludong 13-1 field in the South China Sea.

When the Japanese received Service Contract 46 from the DOE in February, they gave their commitment to invest around $2.7 million in its seven-year exploration program.

In March 1998, Japex also took part in the establishment of Sakhalin Oil and Gas Development Co. Ltd., the Japanese consortium for the Sakhalin-1 project in Russia.

THAT TIME OF THE YEAR Malls and other establishments appear to jump out of station in the second week of September in Angeles City. The shop is sharing crowds because of its mix of bargain items like kites and gadgets for Halloween and Christmas. The city's American legacy makes the celebration of Halloween a highly anticipated commercial event.

Arc Worldwide bags int'l plum

ARC WORLDWIDE PHILIPPINES, the marketing services agency aligned with Leo Burnett Worldwide, won third place in the direct mail standard (business) category for its "comfiBaler" package for Inquirer Libre in the 27th John Caples International Awards held recently in New York City.

Chosen as the third best among direct marketing entries from 44 countries, the "comfiBaler" package helped Libre reach more advertisers than expected.

Libre is a daily newspaper of the Philippine Daily Inquirer's distributed for free in Metro Rail Transit and Light Rail Transit stations. Its high circulation effectively allows Libre to reach the masses more than other commercial dailies.

Libre publishers partnered with Arc Worldwide to come up with the "comfiBaler" direct mail package with the advertising theme "Make Food first thing in the morning."

Three must-avail deals for RECRUITMENT ADS
from the country's quality response leader, the free newspaper with a captured 'masa' market
and the first national compact newspaper.

coming your way soon...

Inquirer
The Power of Knowing

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

STYLE

Cindy Kurleto hits the fashion Freeway with a fresh collection

Free as a bird

By Charlie V. Hood

IN THE FACE OF several fashion resurgences and seasons heralding what's hot, looking to-the-moment has never been easier for the girl on the street and the wannabe fashionista.

Freeway lines up to its name by always moving out up-to-the-last-minute clothes and accessories for the coming fashionistas on a budget.

Its Freeway's new collection, army styles go functional, with cropped jackets bedecking with multi-pocket pants and miniskirts.

Black is resurrected in a variety

PAGE 12

Free as a bird

IT'S black with a vengeance in this stretch velour, halter backless long dress with high side slits (P1,095).

ORANGE mania for satiny print dress to shiny pink stretch spandex (P640)

of silhouettes, including the wrap-around dress, the little black dress.

Pitas, ruffled Victorian tops get a young, modern twist paired with denims, while romantic skirts are teamed with tees or tank tops.

Fresh is the Freeway credo, and consistent with that, it has launched VJ, actress and commercial model Cindy Kimberly as its new image model.

Kimberly is a fresh color feature as MTV VJ that always looking her trendiest best is part of the job. Everyone else has personal style like a glove.

She of the hottest facial entertainers today, Kimberly is also part of the TV fantasy series "Encantadia," and flies to Singapore, Thailand, Japan and New York now and then for various campaigns and shooting gigs.

GEM-COLORED printed satin spaghetti top (P322) over studd-pocket denim jeans (P795)

PURPLE tee pants (P595) and a white cropped jacket with studs-adorned hood-maxi accent (P1,095)

LIFESTYLE

And now, Kris the fashion icon

An interesting revelation is that women from as far as Davao order the clothes she wears on TV

KRIS Aquino in gown by Inno Sotto. Photograph by Jun-ok Lum for Mare's magazine

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

I HAD A MOST REVEALING chat with Inno Sotto about, of all people, Kris Aquino, the "mother" of all celebs today.

The other day after some coercion, Inno told me how women from as far away as Davao would come to him to have dresses in greater resemblance, if not exactly the same as, those Kris wore on "The Buzz."

"I watch after the show! I get orders for the knockback or the plunging neckline," Inno said. "They ask me to literally do copies of what Kris wore on the show."

Recently an woman from Baliwasan came to him requesting the "Kris knockoffs." Of course, there are also women from mega Manila making the same request.

Three women cut across ages, from their 20s to their 40s, Inno said.

That's a revelation, even given the national presence Kris has become. Thanks or no thanks to her storied life, most of it her love life, Kris is not only a celebrity but a national obsession as well. She is an unscripted reality-TV whose antics and hurt the country has followed since her childhood. Of course, as a celebrity she herself is the villainess and she became rolled into one. You have a choice of which role you like to see in her. No other actress/artiste could boast (present) a better than she herself.

Now, we discover that she's become a fashion icon as well. Fashion writers may be looking at the wrong places for fashion or style icons. This term tag has been used rather loosely on models, party animals, young socialites, but, in fact, the most dominant fashion icon is Kris. This is so not only because she is in show biz, or that she has the hottest result of television here and abroad, or that she has a celebrity's generous budget for wardrobe and style. It is also because she has developed the body for those clothes. You end up talking not only about her gown or her decolletage, you also talk about—okay cry—that cleavage, or that hourglass contour.

Now that's the ultimate iconic exercise.

What many may not know is that Kris works at her fashion.

"She is very visual," said Inno. "She knows what looks good on her. She knows her body. She knows that people watch her. She knows the medium that is television. She's conscious of the cameras, that it shows not only her front but (she has) back."

And fashion rule No. 1: She knows what colors to wear on her. Pink is her favorite. It brings out her milky white complexion. She wears no ruinous hues. If not pink, she knows the other cool fragrant colors that enhance that porcelain skin—even the neutrals that few women can get away it. For instance, on the September Mares cover, she's in a daring Inno Sotto decolletage with delicate beadwork, in taupe this time.

Inno says fit is corner at a most appropriate time when fashion is body and skin. "She looks good here, not fully covered," the couturier noted.

Kris is a diligent reader of fashion magazines; she researches on her clothes and at this pretty up to date. She listens to her wardrobe. She pays fee to...JC Buenaflo is her other regular designer.

Moreover, she has the discipline to wear her fashion. She reportedly prepares for weeks or even months for a shoot, even going on a spartan diet. For instance, it took Mares almost a year to woo her to do the cover shoot...during which she'd cancel word that she wasn't (her) prepared yet, given her killer schedule. She assured to look best on the cover—by her exacting standards—from hair to toe. As one designer said, "I work other models never like her."

The actor shoot itself at Inno Hilt to La Mesa Dam was at an unholy hour—6 a.m. She even arrived thirty ahead of Ate de Leon. For more than three hours ended The beating on, Inno made her stroll the gamut of fashion poses. "Overnight her-to-go-Selfserge, and she did the shot like a trooper, even at a hot 11 a.m.," Inno said.

"People may not know how hard she works at her craft, (even a fashion shoot," said Inno.

YOU'LL need the following tools, which you can find in craft stores.

TAKE your pick from a wide variety of earring beads, which you'll use to attach the various components you will be creating.

CHERRY Santos shows Jean Tan and Dyrine Dee some basic earring-making techniques.

SHORTCUT Santos and Cielo Pilches patiently work on their masterpieces.

CRIS Santiago obviously enjoys working with her hands while Tita Girlie is slightly baffled and eventually decides to just scour the malls for store-bought earrings.

BRENDA Cancio proudly shows off her work as Cherry beams with approval.

EVEN children can join in the fun as mommy Jean and 4-year-old Nicolette create their own colorful bead combinations.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

1 Start by cutting two inches from the 3-inch gauge wire. You need this to create a component, which you will eventually attach to another component or to the earring head. The 2 also is what you will use to string your choice of beads.

2 Use the long nose to form a tiny loop on one end. To secure the loop, use the pliers to twist the wire around the rest of the loop. Try to make the twisted area as short and tight as possible.

3 Create a design or color combination by stringing beads or spacers of your choice. The loop you form acts as a stopper but make sure the beads cover the area where the wire is twisted. The only visible part should be the tiny loop at the end of the wire.

4 Cut the wire to the length you need. Then form another loop and twist the wire to seal the end. This forms your first component.

5 Repeat the process to create as many components as you like.

6 You can then attach the components to each other or to a chain. Regular length of chain is about five links but it all depends on your design.

7 Attach the components, chains and the earring head with the use of links and a long nose. Use the pliers to open the link but don't open wider than necessary. To seal, simply twist slightly in opposite directions.

8 Attach the earring head to the hook with the use of a link and a long nose.

9 If steps two and four are a bit too difficult for you, try this shortcut:

- Form a loop, which you can secure close (instead of twisting the wire).
- Insert the beads then use wire to desired length.
- To seal, form another loop and insert the loose end to the bead hole.

D-I-Y earrings

YOILA! Here are the finished products of three of Cherry's students.

ALTHOUGH THIS SHOWBIZ IS THE accessory of choice this season, chandelier earrings are still quite popular. In fact, various styles and prices abound in the local market, from P85 shoulder dusters at building 168 in Divisoria, and-priced dangles made of crystals and semi-precious stones at Greenhills to meticulous antique finds at fine jewelry stores.

There's literally a candy store of great finds and bargains out there. But why not try to create your own pair of earrings with your choice of beads and color combinations?

As a starting point, it's a good idea to take a class on basic jewelry-making. This way, a qualified instructor can demonstrate the different techniques involved. Of course, if you're confident enough, all you need to start are some basic tools and a simple jewelry-making book.

But according to artist/jewelry designer Cherry Santos, it's best to take a class if you really want to get into it. Cherry conducts jewelry-making workshops and she says you'll need a lot of time plus a certain amount of patience and creativity to create your own pieces. "It can get a bit frustrating at first because you work with tiny components. But it's also quite fun and rewarding," she adds.

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Southwood

I was able to sit in and take notes at one of Cherry's classes. Together with six enthusiastic students, I learned the rudiments of earring-making. Just a caveat, earring-making is apparently not for everyone. Only three determined participants completed the class that afternoon.

In any case, to get you started, read on for some of the things we learned.

Tools of the trade

You'll need the following in your jewelry making kit:

Small pliers and a long nose (to cut and form wires and links)

3-mm gauge stainless steel wire

Stainless steel chain links

Snap-lock steel earring hooks

Stainless steel links

Spacers (optional)

Earring beads

Beads

You can find most of these items in craft shops or any jewelry hardware stores. Or try stores like Caroline's.

Cherry urges her students to get creative by using different components and to create depth by combining dark and light colors or using varying lengths and textures.

"The earrings don't have to be symmetrical in design. It's more interesting when they're not," she adds.

It's a lot simpler than it sounds and by looking at photos of finished products, you'll actually get a better idea how it's done. Just remember to have fun while indulging in your little D-I-Y project.

CHERRY brought these pretty earrings, which she had made, to inspire her students to get creative.

Call or text 0919-5229078.

E-mail the author at apples@edsamail.com.

And now, Kris the fashion icon

From page A1

How does she pull it off? "She loves what she's doing so she gives it her best," said Jun, who has shot Kris since her first product endorsement in the '80s during the Cory Aquino era. The recent cover shoot was Kris' first in a long time.

Kris has the biggest number of endorsements in the country today—14, I believe. Now that's what you call an icon.

'Evil bodings'

The Jennifer Aniston score became the biggest selling Vanity Fair cover of all time, leaving Carolyn Bessette Kennedy's in 1999 shortly after the latter's death.

Over lunch last week, I caught a hilarious piece of gossip—the whole Manolo rabbit ear's mouth, meaning Imee Cojuangco in Kris-world) is talking about the "rest" of the "evil bodings," which if it accelerates could derail Imee Cojuangco's "Way of the World." "Evil bodings," to those who need translation, is the latest rag given Manolo's beautiful, young but bitchy, feisty gays who spice up our drab days with their latest riffs and explosions. Now, the lunch talk went...one "evil bodings" is the meeting in our the other ones... sorry, we cannot elaborate in this case.

It'll be a busy year end for fashion...the Fashion Design Council of the Philippines will have its gala and competition in October. Cesar Iscaro will have his Spring/Summer '06 collection on Sept. 20 at Ayala Museum. Linda Jun Gan will have an intimate show on Sept 28. Ruje Laurel will have his collection sponsored by the Young Presidents Organization in December.

Whew!!! we might hold a Fashion Week in Cebu in the 3rd quarter. And Metrosexual, the biggest gathering of the foremost designers, will be in November.